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DOMESTIC LIFE;

OR,

HINTS FOR DAILY USE.



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DOMESTIC LIFE.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

TEA VISITS IMPROVED.

"AND now the troubles of married life are beginning with me;" said Mrs. Elliott to her sister, Miss Clarke, who, as bridesmaid, was assisting in putting a finishing stroke to the arrangements of the best parlour, preparatory to receiving a party of ladies, who were coming to pay the wedding visit. "I hate tea visiting with all my heart."

"So do I, as it is generally conducted. It seems nothing better than an idle waste of time."

"Yes, and breaking up the enjoyment of quiet domestic evenings. How happy we have been the last fortnight, sitting in the snug little parlour at our needlework, while William has read to us!"

"And yet, you know, one would not wish to be altogether unsocial and exclusive. We must keep up a little intercourse with society."

"Well, I suppose we must; and, indeed, there are some friends in whose society we find real pleasure and improvement: but people seem so very different when you spend a free social hour with them alone, and when you see them in a party with others. Though every one of the party might be very agreeable alone, yet when they all meet together, it seems as if their tongues were frozen up to every thing interesting and profitable, and let loose only to nonsense and scandal. Do you not recollect what mischief was made at Mrs. Hall's wedding party? Half the village was set together by the ears about some trifling gossiping remark, too paltry even to remember: but there was appealing, and proving, and denying, and defending, and explaining, and apologizing, going on for months afterwards; and I do not believe, after all, that any of the party was cordially satisfied. I should be very much grieved if any such mischief was to arise from our party, and so I am sure would William, he is such a lover of peace."

"I hope mamma will be able to come, and keep us all in order. She has such a happy knack of giving an interesting and profitable turn to conversation, and preventing its stagnating, or becoming trifling and mischievous."

"Yes, and Mrs. Elliott, too. I am sure you will be delighted with her society. I feel it quite a privilege to be connected with her. If our party only consisted of the two mothers besides ourselves, we should be sure to spend a pleasant evening, and learn something worth remember-

ing. Well, we must take things as they come. Just tell me whether these bell-pulls hang even."

"Yes, quite right; and I think the room altogether looks as neat and tasteful as possible."

"I hope William will be pleased with it. You know, the carpet and curtains were his choosing; and really the bell-pulls and urn-rugs, though presented by two different friends, correspond as well as if they had all been selected in reference to one another."

"They do, indeed; and the ottomans, though they are of so different a style, serve to form an agreeable contrast. You know, we fancied they would never look well together; but nothing could do better than the entire appearance of the room: and I hope we shall find the visitors blend and harmonize as agreeably as the furniture. But it is time for us to go and change our dresses."

The modest arrangements of the toilet were quickly completed, for the sisters, though well dressed, adhered to that simplicity which is alike consonant with economy, despatch, and elegance. No sooner had they taken their seats at the work table, than Mr. Elliott made his appearance, conducting the two matrons whose presence had been anticipated with so much desire by the young ladies. The arrival of the mothers, and their affectionate congratulations, quite dispelled the gloomy forebodings of the bride as to the horrors of a first tea visit, and prepared her to receive the rest of her company with confidence and cheerfulness: and, when

the guests had taken their departure, she admitted, that it had really been a pleasant, friendly meeting, and one that would lead her to look forward to its recurrence with pleasure instead of dread. The party consisted of eight ladies : namely, the bride, her two mothers and her sister ; Mrs. Burnet and Mrs. Sharpe, wives of three or four years standing, and each of them having already entered on the weighty and interesting responsibilities of the maternal character ; Mrs. Reed, who had been married only a few months ; and Miss Shirley, a young lady on a visit to her. In the course of the evening, the several gentlemen connected with the above ladies joined the party, to render to the new married pair the accustomed tribute of social courtesy.

No sooner were the ladies seated at their needlework and netting, than an inquiry of one of the elder ladies after the health, growth, and advancement of the little ones, encouraged each of the young mothers to speak about her children ; not with the very common but disgusting boasting of their beauties, or relating their wonderful sayings and doings, but as really desirous to avail herself of the wisdom and experience of the elder matrons, as a guide to her own movements in the physical management of her offspring, in the cultivation of their faculties, or in the regulation of their tempers and dispositions.

This opening gave a domestic cast to the conversation of the evening ; and though books, scenery, philanthropic institutions, and other topics of general interest gave occasional variety,

there seemed in the company a general disposition to recur to the relationships and duties of domestic life, and the vast importance of their being rightly understood and faithfully discharged. Several instances were mentioned of the lamentable results of ignorance, indifference, or neglect, as well as some pleasing facts of an opposite nature. Each of the party seemed to be quickened to a sense of her own responsibilities; and, before they separated, a plan was suggested and agreed upon, for devoting one evening in a fortnight to the cultivation of social and Christian intercourse, with an especial view to domestic improvement; the meetings to be held at the houses of the several friends alternately: on each occasion one or more papers to be read, as the time might allow; the papers to consist of essays, anecdotes, sketches, or letters, original or selected, having an especial bearing on domestic life and every day duties, to be furnished by the members in rotation; the friend at whose house the last meeting was held being expected to produce a paper, or relate some interesting fact, or suggest a topic of conversation for the next occasion; every meeting to be closed with reading the Scriptures and prayer; minutes of the meetings to be kept by a secretary, to whose care all papers were to be committed. Mr. Elliott, junior, was unanimously called to the office of secretary, which he accepted, on condition of its exempting him, at least for the present, while his inexperience of domestic life might be admitted as a plea of disqualification, from furnishing a paper for the

ensuing occasion, which would otherwise have fallen to his lot. The plan was carried out with considerable spirit and regularity, sometimes, indeed, interrupted by the visitations of affliction in one or other of the families. These, however, were useful, in occasionally calling the attention of the friends to a class of subjects calculated for improvement, but to which persons, in general, are too little inclined to recur, until called aside to listen to the voice of God, speaking in the afflictive dispensations of his providence.

The social meetings were frequently enlivened by occasional visitors, who happened to be staying with one or other of the families, most of whom took an interest in the proceedings of "The Domestic Tea Party," and gratified the company with some interesting communications. In course of time the papers accumulated to a considerable mass, and it was thought desirable to form them into a volume, which it was hoped might impart some portion of interest and instruction to a wider circle than that for whose use they were originally written.

The first meeting, after the formation of the little society, was appointed to be held at Mrs. Clarke's house, and the Rev. Mr. Sharpe was requested to furnish a paper, which was approved, and committed to the custody of the secretary.

EVENING I.



THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

THE Father of the families of all the earth has wisely and graciously appointed the relations of life which we sustain one to another; and by them he preserves that union and order which are so observable in his providential arrangements, and which are intimately connected with the happiness of his creatures. These relations are the lesser links of that chain which binds the whole of society together in harmony and love; and, perhaps, no subject is more adapted for the present occasion, than a few remarks upon the reciprocal duties of the members of families: we shall, therefore, now proceed to address a few general hints to masters, parents, children, and servants.

Masters and *Mistresses* are placed by the providence of God at the head of their families, and they are required by him to rule over their household, with firmness, wisdom, and love. They must not weakly relinquish their superiority, or forget their responsibility; yet authority must always be directed by prudence, and

always regulated by kindness. The apostle Paul, referring to the duties of masters to their servants, says, "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him," Eph. vi. 9. This passage shows the reciprocal nature of these duties, cautions masters against harshness, and directs them to consider their relation to Him whose servants they are. He who duly remembers his relation to God, and his obligations to an unseen Saviour, will be anxious to perform the duties of a master aright; he will rule in the fear of the Lord, and will zealously endeavour to promote the spiritual and temporal interests of his family, by his instructions, his prayers, his influence, and his example.

The heads of families, in addition to their duties towards their servants, are placed in a most responsible family relation as *Parents*. The principle of natural affection gives them a peculiar influence over their beloved children, for the right use of which they are accountable to God. In guiding and restraining, the parents must begin early—act harmoniously—and labour perseveringly. Discipline must be steadily maintained; but firmness should be so blended with gentleness and love, that parents may never lose the powerful hold they possess on the affections of their children: "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," Eph. vi. 4. This Divine direction teaches them to be watchful over the passions of their children; to

guard against needless severity ; to train them up constantly by suitable discipline and instruction ; and to be especially attentive to their religious instruction—to their immortal souls, as well as their perishing bodies and worldly interests.

The obligation of parents thus to educate their children is imperative ; no other persons can engage in this work with equal advantages, nor is any excuse to be admitted for the neglect of a duty enjoined by the commands of God and the dictates of natural affection. Parents may be assisted by teachers ; but nothing can supersede the obligation which rests on them to train up their offspring in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Hence, God gave this expressive law to parents : “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up :” and further, to enforce domestic instruction, it is added, “Thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates,” Deut. vi. 6, 7, 9.

Children are bound, by the most sacred obligations, to love, honour, and obey their parents. The dictates of natural affection, and the obligations of gratitude, concur with the commands of God to enforce this duty ; and he has been pleased also to annex to it a promise of temporal blessings : “Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honour thy father and

mother ; which is the first commandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth," Eph. vi. 1—3. An undutiful child never yet was a happy child.

The children of a family should also remember their obligations one to another, and should "strive together" only to promote each other's happiness and improvement. Brethren and sisters should dwell together in unity and love ; hatred and envy should never be allowed to disturb their peace ; and individual sacrifices should be cheerfully made to preserve the comfort of the family circle.

Servants are bound to honour and obey their masters and mistresses ; to be diligent, and faithful in their duties, and careful of the property entrusted to them. In their conversation and manners they must be respectful and obliging ; and the principles from which they act should not be of a selfish, or merely temporal nature. Hence St. Paul says to Titus, "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again ; nor purloining, but showing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," Titus ii. 9, 10. The persons referred to, it is certain, were most of them slaves ; and if these duties were required of them, how much more of servants, and especially of those who profess to be Christians ! And what an exalted honour is conferred on domestics, when their conduct is so exemplary as even to "adorn the doctrine of God our Sa-

viour in all things!" Indeed, it has often pleased God to bless the pious and consistent conduct of servants to the spiritual profit of their masters, their children, and also to fellow servants.

The conduct of servants one to another should be always marked by kindness, good temper, an obliging disposition, and a cheerful willingness to help each other. Such conduct will tend to promote their comfort and usefulness; whereas, selfishness and indifference to the welfare of fellow servants, will make all parties ill-tempered, uncomfortable, and miserable.

The children of a family are necessarily placed much within the influence of servants: this thought should lead them to be very particular as to their conversation and example; for the young are very quick observers, and very ready imitators of that which is evil. How often have the characters of the young received irreparable injury from the conduct of servants! And how often have the pious instructions, the amiable conduct, and the consistent behaviour of a pious servant, proved a permanent blessing to the children of their employers! Also, the effects of evil principles, thus implanted by bad servants, have been apparent in the conduct of those children when grown up into bad masters. Finally, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do

them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit," 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

It is very observable, that the apostle, in enforcing the relative duties of each of the members of families to whom we have referred, connects them most intimately with religious obligations, and with our duties to our God and Saviour: thus *Masters* are required to remember their "Master in heaven"—*Parents* are to educate their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord"—*Children* are to obey their "parents in the Lord"—and *Servants* are to fulfil their duties "as unto Christ," and "as the servants of Christ."

These representations teach us that we should seek the grace of our God and Saviour continually, to enable us to fulfil OUR RELATIVE DUTIES aright; that we should act as in his sight, and in obedience to his will; and that, in our social relations, we should "do all to the glory of God," and "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

In the course of conversation reference was made to a sermon which some of the party had recently heard, on family religion; and, by the joint efforts of several friends, some of its leading particulars were called to remembrance, and taken down. The paper was entitled

THE ABODE OF HAPPINESS.

ALL persons are inquiring after happiness, and those who have entered into domestic relations

are naturally seeking *domestic* happiness ; but, from the frequent complaints that assail our ears, there is reason to fear that few families have found the invaluable blessing. The poor complain of their poverty and destitution ; one branch of the family, perhaps, is accused of occasioning it by indolence, and another by extravagance : unkindness, suspicions, jealousies, and selfishness disturb the family union, and confusion and misery reign in the dwelling. And even in the abodes of wealth and splendour, where more is possessed than heart could wish, the care-worn brow, the peevish voice, the discontented murmurs of the inmates, too clearly prove that happiness dwells not there. The voice of mirth is often heard in the dwelling of the ungodly, but it is empty, short-lived mirth, like the crackling of thorns ; very different from the voice of solid, substantial joy.

But there are families, both in the higher and the lower classes of society, of a different order : they are those to which the pious psalmist alluded, when he said, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous," Psa. cxviii. 15. The righteous are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ ; their hearts are right in the sight of God ; they desire in all things to be conformed to his righteous law, and to perfect holiness in his fear ; and they are the only happy individuals, and happy families. Their happiness proceeds from God, and is communicated in the experience of his salvation. While they were living at enmity with God, under a load of guilt, and in

constant dread of death, they were strangers to peace of mind and happiness ; but salvation and rejoicing came together. " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1, 2.

The effects of an experience of salvation are such as to promote happiness in every individual, and in those with whom each is connected. The grace of God bringeth salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," Titus ii. 11, 12. Vice is very expensive ; it exposes men to much poverty and misery : it is a great thing to be enabled to forsake it. The evil passions of men are the cause of discord, contention, and wretchedness : there is a mighty advantage in having them brought under control. Thus " godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. It not only makes a man fit for heaven, but renders him more agreeable and useful in every station he fills on earth.

" Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," Job v. 7. The highest and most favoured lot is not exempt from the inroads of sickness, sorrow, and death. Much of human unhappiness arises from the want of a refuge and support under these common and inevitable calamities. " But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord : he is their strength in the time of

7 trouble," Psa. xxxvii. 39. The salvation of which they are made the happy partakers, enables them to "glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope," Rom. v. 3, 4; and while they look not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal, they have the delightful consciousness that their light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. Well may the "voice of rejoicing and of salvation" be heard *together* "in the tabernacles of the righteous."

This voice is heard in personal grateful acknowledgment. The truly happy families are composed of individuals who can say, "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation," Isa. xii. 2. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," Luke i. 46, 47.

When these individuals enter into domestic relations, the voice of rejoicing and salvation is heard in their social converse. They love to speak together of the great things of God's law—of their deliverance—their hopes—their obligations—their resources—and their prospects. Theirs is very different from the frothy, or the vicious conversation of the world. Their children and servants, too, hear the same voice; they are diligently instructed in the way of salvation, and urged to seek an interest in that

unspeakable blessing which is free to all, and which imparts such solid satisfaction and joy to those who receive it.

This voice is heard also in daily prayer. *That* can scarcely be called a tabernacle of the righteous where no domestic altar is reared. Those who are partakers of the joys of God's salvation, will not be satisfied with expressing their feelings in the closet only, but will conscientiously observe the duty, and highly prize the privilege, of calling upon God in their domestic circle. And oh, what a source of supply ! what a treasury of wisdom and prudence ! what a refuge in distress ! what a centre and bond of family union will the throne of grace be found ! The worldling, and the worldly family, eagerly, yet vacantly, look around and say, "Who will show us any good ?" "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed ?" But the Christian calmly says, "My Father knoweth that I have need of these things. He shall choose our inheritance for us. In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, our wants shall be made known to him. He will feed us with food convenient for us ; bread shall be given, and our water shall be sure. We will not seek great things for ourselves, but be content with the allotments of his providence ; but let it be our chief concern while we live upon his bounty, to live to his glory." Where such a spirit pervades the heart, and reigns in the family, there the peace of God, which passes all understanding, sheds its benign influence, and renders

the individual and the family unspeakably happy. Yes, even the poor family, in straitened circumstances, with mean accommodations and uncertain prospects, possesses a bliss that the estates and the coffers, the splendour and luxury, of ungodly worldlings never conferred.

In perplexity and difficulty, the families who know not God are at their wit's end, turning hither and thither, and knowing not what to do; but the Christian family can say, "We lack wisdom; let us ask it of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. In all our ways let us acknowledge him, and he will direct our steps. He shall guide us by His counsel, and afterwards receive us into His glory."

In worldly families, selfishness, discord, contention, and every evil work, are found the leading principles; but when the Christian family bends around the household altar, and says, "*Our Father*, which art in heaven—forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us;" surely all their petty strifes and animosities must be buried there, and they must rise from their knees with the feeling—"We be brethren, let us not fall out by the way; children of God, let us love one another."

The worldly family has no consolation in adversity, no refuge in distress; but in the Christian family, when disappointment baffles their projects, or death invades their circle, like the disciples of old, they go and tell Jesus; and while pouring forth their sorrows before His throne of mercy, hear a voice issuing from the sanctuary, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers,

and shut thy doors about thee: until these calamities be overpast. I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee. God is your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Oh, surely, round the domestic altar, the voice of rejoicing and of salvation should, in all circumstances, be heard in the dwelling of the righteous!

It is heard also in the voice of grateful praise. "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death," *Psa. lxxviii. 20.*

"Perpetual blessings from His hand,
Demand perpetual songs of praise."

Both experience and hope demand a grateful song. The families of the righteous are crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercy. Family preservation, family supplies, family deliverances, daily claim the erection of a family Ebenezer, to Him who has hitherto helped them. And when all unite in indulging a good hope through grace, that even death shall not long interrupt their delightful intercourse, and eternity for ever resume it, each may well adopt the cheerful grateful sentiment—"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," *Psa. xxiii. 6.*

And now, need it be any longer a matter of inquiry, "Where is the abode of happiness?" If she has a dwelling on earth, it is in the tabernacles of the righteous. Let every individual, then, seek an interest in the salvation of Christ;

let every family strive to live together in piety, peace, and holy love ; and on them the blessing will be commanded, even life for evermore.

“ To dwell with God, to taste his love,
Is the full heaven enjoy'd above ;
And the sweet expectation, now,
Is the young dawn of heaven below.”

Before the party separated, it was arranged that the next meeting should take place at the house of Mr. Elliott, senior ; and old Mrs. Clarke, the hostess on the present occasion, was requested to favour the company with her sentiments on some topic of domestic interest ; the two recently married couples presenting a special request, that, if agreeable to the party in general, the subject should have a bearing on the circumstances and duties connected with a first entrance on the engagements of domestic life. The old lady said she could not promise any thing original, but she hoped in the interval to be able to select something suitable.

EVENING II.



A GOOD BOOK RECOMMENDED.

MINDFUL of her engagement, Mrs. Clarke attended the domestic tea party, bringing with her several books. On being called upon for her contribution to the entertainment and instruction of the evening, she replied, "I have been looking through this little volume, with the intention of selecting a piece for this evening; but it is so truly excellent, that I would strongly recommend the whole to the careful perusal of all my dear friends, especially those who have recently entered into family connexions. I shall, therefore, present the book to my son and daughter Elliott, on condition of their lending it to any of our friends who may be inclined to read it, and content myself with one short extract, or rather quotation, from an old author. After this, as I am not equal to much reading aloud, some other friend will, perhaps, read to the company another extract or two; and if time allow, and they think it worthy of their attention, a short paper, entitled, 'The Family Motto.'"

So saying, Mrs. Clarke read the following extract, and then presented to the young people "James's Family Monitor; or, a Help to Domestic Happiness."

"Study," said an old author, "the duties of marriage before you enter into it. There are crosses to be borne, there are snares to be avoided, and manifold obligations to be discharged, as well as great felicity to be enjoyed. And should no provision be made? For want of this, result the frequent disappointments of that honourable estate. Hence that repentance which is at once *too soon* and *too late*. The husband knows not how to rule, and the wife knows not how to obey. Both are ignorant, both conceited, and both miserable. 'In all thy ways acknowledge HIM, and he shall direct thy steps.'"

A LETTER FROM MR. S. DREW TO HIS
CHILDREN.

MY dear John and Anna;—Your friend has given us a very flattering account of your domestic procedure. He seems to think that neither you, nor Samuel and rib, have thus far forfeited a fair title to the "flitch of bacon." Should either of you win it, the event must be added to the only two circumstances on record, in which it was actually claimed and carried off. In one instance, a sea captain and his wife succeeded, he being compelled to go to sea the day after marriage, and not returning until its

anniversary arrived ; the other was where the lady was, I believe, both deaf and dumb, and the gentleman remarkably good-humoured. In too many instances domestic feuds arise from trifles. Anna will recollect the tale I have frequently told, of a man and his wife quarrelling about the flock of birds which flew over their house, whether they were crows or rooks. The knotty point led to blows three years following, and they at last left the affair undecided.

Be kind, affectionate, and tender-hearted towards each other ; not putting on sullen countenances, or laying the foundation of sighs. My dear Anna will remember that some months since, I told her no female ought to be married until she has learned the piece entitled, " Pin the basket," and she has frequently heard me repeat these lines :

" Ill fares the luckless family that shows
A cock that's silent, and a hen that crows."

Whenever contentions for mastery creep into a house, genuine affection abates in its fervour, and domestic peace retires.

I trust that, both in temporal engagements and spiritual concerns, you will mutually help each other on, and, by sharing its weight, diminish the load which life will compel you to bear. Remember that in the affairs of this life, we are justified by works, and not by faith ; so that industry, frugality, and economy are all necessary to render even trade successful.

I would wish you to keep as little company as possible ; at least all such company as would

lead to expensive entertainments. The festivity would supply a moderate family for a week. If you open the door to an enlargement of company, it will lead to unseasonable hours, generate habits of dissipation, and sometimes furnish occasions of regret. I would not inculcate an unsociable disposition, but guard against anything that looks like avoidable expense. Two horses travelling side by side mutually stimulate each other, so that both go faster than either would if travelling alone.

A similar propensity may be found in human nature. The entertainment made by A must be rivalled by B, exceeded by C, and surpassed by D; and thus, in a spiral line, we mount on the steps of ambitious display, till, at length, we get so high that we grow giddy, fall down, and are ruined.

Sublunary bliss, however, is, at the best, a sickly plant, and no care or culture can give it permanence, or preserve it from the effect of storms. That only is durable which blooms in the regions of immortality, where it will flourish in perennial verdure. Let us, then, my dear children, look for it there, and lay up for ourselves treasures where moth and rust corrupt not, nor thieves break through and steal.

Before this letter reaches you, we shall, if spared, have entered on a new portion of existence: 1824 will have given in its account at the great tribunal, and have sunk into the ocean of eternity. Let us endeavour so to live through 1825, that, if permitted to see its close, we may look back with less regret than we must now on

its predecessor. With best wishes for your happiness, I remain, dear children,

Your affectionate father,

SAMUEL DREW.

HINTS TO A YOUNG WIFE.

YOU are now, my young friend, a wife. How anxiously have you looked forward to the event which has now taken place, and made you a married woman. You can recollect the time when you knew not who was destined for your husband; you have fancied what his person, his mind, his habits, and disposition might be; you have feared lest, unwittingly, you should make an unhappy choice, and fall into the worst of miseries—an ill-suited marriage. When you have thought on this, sometimes you have been ready to say, “I will not venture; I will remain as I am.” Again, you have fancied one whose kind hand would lead you tenderly on through the trials of life; one, whose prudence and care would be ever exerted for your welfare; who would protect you from the impositions and rough treatment of an unkind world, to which the weakness and timidity of womanhood would expose you: perhaps you have formed to yourself a model too perfect to be realized. However, whatever your speculations may have been, your choice is now made. And oh, methinks I hear you say, “How much have I to love, to value in my husband!” I rejoice to hear you say so. O dwell upon his virtues, think well of

all he says and does, cultivate what you know he approves, and endeavour to let your tastes and sympathies blend as much as possible. You have a rough, a thorny way before you; morn smiles upon you now, and flowers bloom in your path, but trouble will overtake you; you will have to toil on together through sultry heat and wintry rain—now seeking shelter from the storm, now going forth with weary feet to pursue your journey. Stand then firmly, affectionately by each other, and recollect that the burden and heat of the day is chiefly felt by him who has promised you protection. Be ready, then, to do him good, and not evil, all the days of your life. Think on him for one moment, labouring with busy hand, with anxious eye and thoughtful brow, for your support and comfort, and say, “Does he not deserve a happy home?” Such it is, in a great measure, in your power to make it. “I am most willing to exert every effort,” methinks I hear you say, “to make a good wife, and to render ours a happy home.”

Come, then, take first the golden key of prayer, and unlock the treasury of heaven, and receive the day’s supplies of grace, and strength, and wisdom, which you need, from the Giver of every good and perfect gift. I will not with curious ear intrude upon the devotions of your closet, before the duties, pleasures, and cares of the day have engaged your attention; or when evening returns listen to the grateful strains of praise and adoration which rise from your heart and tongue to Him, who, according to his promise, has through the day afforded every

needful supply : but, I would say, neglect not this first duty of the new day ; let it be the foundation on which all other duties are reared : consider that in this God often bestows upon us a panoply to defend us against the world, the flesh, and the devil ; but, if we ask not for it, how can we expect to receive ? No ; we must go forth unarmed to the battle, and then how can we expect to conquer ?

And now, let me fancy you commencing the household duties. Your early breakfast hour is over, and the kitchen, pantry, and, in fact, the whole home, demands the wife's eye. The good man of the house is gone forth to his labours. O, consider his toil, and let not sloth or waste in your department prevent his industry from claiming its due reward, an honest livelihood. "Owe no man anything," says the Scripture. And a wise proverb says, "Out of debt out of danger;" and recollect, that the prudent management of the wife is as needful to this as the labour of the husband. But, before I proceed, let me, my dear young friend, warn you against an error into which some very well-meaning wives fall ; let not your whole heart be engrossed by your *house* : remember, you have a *soul*, a *mind*, a *person*, that require attention as well as a house. Let not the sweet fervour of devotion languish ; let not your mind be left to run wild, nor your person, now neatly attired, become an object of disgust to your husband, for want of attention to neatness and cleanliness. Give to each duty its proper share of regard. Remember, the soul and its concerns stand first,

and then let the husband, the mind, the person, all, come in for their regular and proportionate share. But to return to the house and its duties. I fancy I see you in your suitable morning dress, arranging your plans for the day. Be careful of the fragments which remain from your last plentiful meal; recollect that One, whose are the cattle upon a thousand hills, gave command that such should be gathered up, that nothing be lost. And O, look around in your neighbourhood. Is there no mother anxiously struggling to provide for her starving little ones, to whom the scraps of your table would help to afford a meal? Save them carefully; and when once the blessing of those that were ready to perish has been returned into your bosom, I am sure your affectionate heart will experience such a satisfaction, that no waste will be allowed in your larder; first, for your own sake, that your substance be not wasted, and next, that you may have the pleasure of giving a morsel to the hungry.

Calculate what you ought to spend for every several article, and keep a daily watch that you do not exceed the allotted sum. Such caution on the part of the wife, has often gone far towards preventing a disgraceful failure; and it is surprising, how strict attention to the rule of living within your income, relieves the mind of that encumbered state of care which an unguarded expenditure is sure to produce. Do not say, "Oh, I spend while the money lasts, and then call upon my husband for more. I do not exactly know what our living costs us, but I am

not aware that much is wasted." Give yourself the trouble, for a month, to look strictly into the state of your expenditure, and see whether you do not find many things which require the careful regulation of a mistress. It is your duty to know the exact state of your outlay, and the price of every article of provision that comes into your house.

Let your servants have early and distinct orders for the arrangement of the dinner table; remember, that confusion then will spoil that social hour that ought to be crowned with a smile, but which is too often embittered for want of forethought. And now, my young friend, having seen all put in a train, if I may so speak, in the kitchen, and prevented being put to the blush, if a stranger should call, by an unswept entry, an unpolished door plate, and a littered and dirty parlour—with a peaceful and cheerful mind, you turn to the tidy work-basket, or the pious or entertaining book. By and by, perhaps, the lovely babe will occupy this hour, and by its smiles and healthy looks, tell a sweet tale of maternal attention. Your own hands will bathe its healthy limbs; and take care that convulsions shall not follow the hireling's careless pin or tightened bandage. Then comes the double knock at the door, the welcome signal of the dear husband's arrival, at the sound of which your heart beats with delight. You fly to the door, and greet his coming with such a smile, as charms every emotion of his bosom into peace; and you sit down to the comfortable meal.

“ Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth;
Nor do ye madly, like an impious world,
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God
Who made them an intruder on their joys,
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise
A jarring note—themes of a graver tone
Exciting oft your gratitude and love.”

But, by and by, business calls the good man of the house to journey; he leaves his home and his concerns in the hands of her who ought to have his welfare nearest her heart; the helm is given into her hands for a time. What says my young friend? “ My husband’s eye is not upon me; now for a little indulgence. Now I can do such and such a thing; and he will never be at all the wiser.” Oh no, no! are you not one in interest? in all? Never once deceive your husband, as you would that he should never deceive you. No; methinks I hear you say, “ He is absent. Now for an opportunity of showing my love, esteem, and interest for him and all his concerns. Gracious God! assist my feeble attempts. I will rise earlier, to spend more time in my closet, praying for strength to do my best to guide all well in his absence. I will endeavour to keep alive the flame of prayer upon the family altar. I must not let this sink; I must make his spiritual prosperity, his welfare of body, and success of his journey, a fresh matter for supplication. All that he has left me in trust of, I will be watchful over while he is gone. No business shall be slighted that I can manage; no message forgotten through my carelessness. I will be ready to greet his return

with joy; he shall feel how sweet home is after absence among strangers, and in the midst of the cold and selfish world. Yes, all shall be in order; an account of what business I have had to perform shall be in readiness. He will be pleased to find that I have been punctual and attentive; he shall return to a clean, quiet, well-ordered home. The cheerful hearth shall blaze; the easy vest and warm slippers shall be prepared, and the comfortable, wholesome meal crowned with smiles and sweet social intercourse; while both hearts shall overflow with gratitude to that God who has equally watched over him who went forth among dangers and difficulties abroad, and over those who remained to fulfil the duties of home."

But courage, my young friend; for a sore trial may, and most likely will, come upon you. Should it be your lot to see your beloved husband fall a prey to disease, repine not; God is holding the rod over you. Listen to the lesson of instruction; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

"Our choicest comforts come from Thee,
And go at thy command."

Take care, that in the midst of your anxiety and love, you do not make an idol to usurp the place of your God. Look back; has not this been the case, or can you not trace much that needs correcting? Perhaps, on the other hand, you have not valued your husband enough, and not been thankful enough to God for such a blessing.

And having so done, return to that sick bed ; and, if you have the heart of woman, be a tender and devoted nurse. Send away all gossips ; let not the aching head be distressed by the senseless tattle of the curious busybody : your own noiseless footstep and gentle whisper are most fit for that sick room ; let every desire be anticipated. Methinks I again see you tenderly, patiently, prayerfully watching, while disease is struggling for the mastery. Oh, how intense your anxiety ! how fervent your prayers ! what promises to God for the future : " Spare, O spare my gourd." The conflict is long ; your own strength almost fails ; but cheer up. Look to your Father in heaven for strength and support, and hope in his mercy. Ere long, the parched lip, the feverish skin, the heavy eye, the half-insensible state, give way to better symptoms. Then comes the heartfelt gush of gratitude and pleasure ; hope prevails, prayer is heard : God is, or ought to be, sincerely praised. And now the strengthening food, the delicate vegetable, the cooling draught—all prepared by your own careful, willing hand—tempt him once more to taste. The fresh nosegay meets his languid eye ; the cheering book, read in soft accents by the one he loves ; and, at last, the gentle walk, leaning on your arm, to breathe again the fresh and healthy breeze, bespeaks that the kind providence of God has blessed the anxious nurse's care, and completed the desired recovery.

Then, methinks, I see you rear a fresh pillar in the wilderness, and, inscribing upon it

“Ebenezer,” set off afresh on the way Zionwards, with more earnest prayers for devotedness to God, and spiritual prosperity.

I would conclude these few hints by recommending to your study—not a mere perusal—the following account of a good wife, drawn up by an inspired hand :—

“Who can find a virtuous woman ? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants’ ships ; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it ; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good : her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household ; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it ; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing ; and she

shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates," Prov. xxxi. 10—31.

FEMALE EXCELLENCE.

A DISCREET woman adjusts her expenses to her revenues. Every thing knows its time, and every person his place. She will live within her income, be it large or small: if large, she will not be luxurious; if small, she will not be mean. Proportion and propriety are among the best secrets of domestic wisdom; and there is no surer test of integrity and judgment, than a well-proportioned expenditure.

Women in their course of action describe a smaller circle than men; but the perfection of a circle consists not in its dimension, but in its correctness: there may be here and there a soaring female, who looks down with disdain upon the paltry affairs of this dim speck called earth, who despises order and regularity as indications of a grovelling spirit; but a sound mind judges directly contrary. The larger the capacity, the

wider is the sweep of duties it takes in. A sensible woman loves to imitate that order which is stamped upon the whole creation of God. All the operations of nature are uniform, even in their changes, and regular in their infinite variety. Nay, the great Author of nature himself disdains not to be called the "God of order."

What marks the distinction between the judicious and vulgar economist is this: the narrow-minded woman succeeds tolerably in the filling up, but never in the outline. She is made up of detail, but destitute of plan. Petty duties demand her whole grasp of mind, and after all, the thing is incomplete. There is so much bustle and evident exertion in all she does; so overflowing with a sense of her own merits; looking up to her own performances as the highest possible elevation of human intellect, and looking down on the attainments of more highly gifted women, as so many obstructions to her usefulness; always drawing comparisons to her own advantage, with the cultivated and the refined, and concluding, that because she possesses not their elegance they must necessarily be deficient in her art; while economists of a higher strain execute their well ordered plan as an indispensable duty, but not as a superlative merit. They have too much sense to omit it, but they have too much sense to talk of it. It is their business, not their boast. The effect is produced, but the hand which accomplishes it is not seen. The mechanism is set at work, but it is behind the scenes. The beauty is visible, the labour is kept out of sight.

The misfortune is, that people are apt to fancy, that judgment is a faculty only to be exercised on great occasions; whereas it is one that every hour is calling into exercise. There are certain habits which, though they appear inconsiderable when examined individually, are yet of no small importance to the aggregate. Exactness, punctuality, and the other minor virtues, contribute more than many are aware to promote and to facilitate the exercise of the higher qualities. I would not erect them into a magnitude beyond their real size, as persons are apt to do who are only punctual, and are deficient in the higher qualities; but, by the regular establishment of these habits in a family, it is inconceivable, to those who have not made the experiment, how it saves, how it amplifies time, that canvas upon which all the virtues must be wrought. It is incredible how an orderly division of the day gives apparent rapidity to the wings of time, while a stated devotion of the hour to its employment really lengthens life. It lengthens it by the traces which solid occupation leaves behind it; while it prevents tediousness by affording, with the successive change, the charm of novelty, and keeping up an interest which would flag, if any one employment were too long pursued. Now, all these arrangements of life, these divisions of time, and these selections and appropriations of the business to the hour, come within the department of the lady: and how much will the cares of a man of sense be relieved, if he choose a wife who can do all this for him!

H. MORE.

HINTS TO THE MEMBERS OF FAMILIES.

From Rev. J. Clayton's Address to a Wedding Party.

HAVE you entered the conjugal relation? Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them; even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the "Saviour of the body." Dwell with each other according to knowledge. Cherish the kindest affections—the confidence, the sympathy, the forbearance, the tenderness of love. Make mention of each other in your prayers. Bear one another's burdens. Share in each other's pleasures. Prize each other's society. Protect each other's character. Promote each other's usefulness. Minister, by every care and effort, to each other's comfort, and smooth each other's progress through life, until the autumn of your days shall arrive; and even when infirmity may disqualify you for active attempts to contribute to your reciprocal satisfactions, let your undecayed attachment prove itself by your smile of endearment, by your soothing language, by your ejaculatory and prayerful aspirations, that you may meet hereafter in those realms of light,

and sanctity, and love, where none shall marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be as the angels of God, Matt. xxii. 30.

Do not some of you sustain the parental character? O ye mothers, I need not tell you to foster your beloved infants with attentive care, for it is next to an impossibility that you should forget your tender charge; but let me remind you that there are jewels in those caskets—souls which are committed to your watchful keeping. Plead for them in your retired devotions. Travail anew that Christ may be formed in their hearts, the hope of glory. When their faculties open, seize the favourable opportunity “to pour the fresh instruction on their mind, and teach the young idea how to shoot,” and to awaken in their bosoms an early attachment to those Scriptures, which, from childhood, are able to make them “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” As their powers and attainments advance, endeavour to form their principles and tastes by that unerring standard. Furnish them with books which shall at once entertain and instruct. Show them a pattern of all that is amiable in disposition, courteous in manners, obliging in demeanour, and holy in general conduct. Charge them to reverence and sanctify the sabbath and ordinances of God, and plead with devout earnestness, that your “sons may be as plants grown up in their youth,” and your “daughters as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.” And “ye fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged;” but “bring them up in the nurture

and admonition of the Lord." To the wholesome instruction you impart, the salutary discipline you administer, and the best education you can secure, add your fervent petitions, that God would pour out his Spirit upon your offspring, and cause them to spring up as the grass and as willows by the water-courses, fresh in the green aspect of their virtues, and of quick growth in every thing that is lovely and of good report. As they rise up into life, let them see, in your temper and conduct, an illustrative recommendation of the principles which you profess. Guard against the harshness of asperity, the niggardliness of parsimony, the waste of extravagance, and the explosions of furious passion. Let the law of kindness breathe from your heart, and issue from your lips. Let your bounty expand towards your children, as God enlarges his beneficence towards you. Let the strictness of truth, the transparency of uprightness, the confidence of friendship, the equity of candour, the attentions of courtesy, the succours of sympathy, and the indescribable refinements of paternal love, be conspicuously apparent in your procedures with your sons and daughters, that your domestic harmony may be unimpaired, that the winter of your life may be cheered by their filial attentions, and that you may part at the tomb, not with "feigned regrets and forced mournings," but with the sorrows of true affection, and in the hope of meeting

"Where joy like morning dew distils,
And all the air is love."

This friendly circle also presents to my view some who are placed in the filial relation. Harken, I beseech you, to the voice of God, which bids you honour your father and mother, and obey them in the Lord. Attend to their instructions when they charge you to "remember your Creator in the days of your youth." Avail yourselves, by diligent application, of the advantages to be obtained from the education with which you are favoured. Give them your ingenuous confidence, and consult them on the important engagements of life. Cast a veil over their imperfections, and never make a sport of those improprieties of behaviour, into which they may perchance have fallen. And if the opportunity be not denied to you, prove at all times your readiness to succour and console, and to strew some flowers on the downward path by which they descend to the tomb.

I look on others before me, who are in the fraternal and sisterly relation. Watch against the risings of envy, and against every approach to alienation of heart. Frown upon any person who would attempt to separate you from each other in affection. Take pleasure in one another's prosperity; and if one weeps in sorrow, let the rest mingle their tears with those of the afflicted. Respect the sacredness of each other's property. Trifle not with each other's feelings. "Be pitiful, be courteous." Should any of you, on conviction, become attached to other denominations of genuine Christians than that in which you may have been trained, cherish the spirit of

generous catholicism, distinguishing between the attire which Christianity wears in the present world, which is form and ceremonial, and her bodily substance, which is repentance of sin, faith in the Redeemer, and practical conformity to his example and commands. Should there ever arise in your family connexion (which God forbid) any misguided or immoral individual, too proud and obstinate to own his improprieties, or too undisciplined and romantic to listen to sober remonstrance, pity him, pray for him, and while you cannot consistently wish or seek his society, and carefully shun his example, maintain within your breasts a disposition to relieve him if he be in want, and counsel him if he will hear your advice. In a word, daily bear your entire family interests to the throne of grace, and make specific mention of each other there. This will keep the fire of love alive on the altar of your hearts; this will render you as "a three-fold cord not easily broken;" and will display to open view the spectacle which will excite the exclamation, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psa. cxxxiii. 1.

Among those who are grouped around me at this moment, I perceive there are some of the domestics of our families. We highly appreciate, and are cheerfully inclined to recompense, your good and faithful services. Whatever distinctions a wise Providence has appointed, to secure the order and peace of society, yet on the ground of religion, we plume not ourselves on

any superiority to you. The Saviour of the prince is the Saviour of the peasant. The same laver of regeneration must wash and cleanse the master and the servant. The same holy privileges may be shared by the handmaid and her mistress. The same heaven opens its gates for the admission of us all; and in the same melodious song the entire family of the ransomed shall unite at the grand consummation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!" Rev. v. 9, 12.

EVERY ONE'S WORK.

THERE is, for every one of us, a world to be overcome; flesh to be subdued to the spirit; Satan to be resisted; Christ to be glorified. There is a work which is great, difficult, and continuous. Every day brings its proper work; every relation of life brings its duties; every opportunity brings its own responsibility. But the forgetful hearer never sets about the great work of the Christian life in real earnest; he seems to have no idea that what he hears is meant to influence his practice.

A HINT TO THE MARRIED.

"I HAVE heard," says Matthew Henry, "of a married couple, who, though they were both of

a hasty temper, yet lived comfortably together by simply observing a rule, on which they had mutually agreed, 'Never to be both angry together.'” And he adds, that “an ingenious and pious father was in the habit of giving this advice to his children, when they married :—

‘Doth one speak *fire*? t’other with *water* come :
Is one provok’d? be t’other soft and dumb.’”

THE FAMILY MOTTO.

AFTER a steady attachment of several years, an amiable and pious young couple were looking forward to the approaching period of their union in the tenderest bonds. The produce of the young man’s industry and frugality, while a journeyman, had enabled him to begin business for himself “in a little way.” By the judicious advice of his friends, he had taken a “small” shop, but in an advantageous situation, and had furnished it with a “small” stock of good articles, intending, by close personal application, to carry on his business with a very “small” establishment; and hoping, by “small” profits and quick returns, to obtain a livelihood, and to avoid those embarrassments so frequently resulting to young tradesmen from “setting off with a dash.” The moderation of the young man’s views and intentions at the outset, met the full approbation of the father of his intended bride; who, on paying into her hands the little

accumulated savings of her childhood, with interest thereon, added his own present of £—.*

He then proceeded to address the young couple as follows:—"My dear children, I will give you one motto as your guide through life—'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things,' Phil. iv. 8.

"My children, let *truth* and sincerity be the basis of all your intercourse with each other, and with society in general: have nothing to disguise, nothing to conceal, but let all your words and actions be clear as the light of day. Let the word of truth be your standard and directory, and let all who have intercourse with you be so fully persuaded of your veracity in every particular, that they may need no asseverations to what you simply assert. Then will you have a just and established claim on the veracity of others, and then may you hope successfully to impress the principles, and engage the practice of truth on those around you. Whatever instruction may be imparted to children and servants, as to the obligation of truth and the sin of falsehood, I never knew a child or a servant fear a lie who had received those instructions only from a

* The precise sums are not set down: the young reader in similar circumstances can fill up the blanks upon his own scale, and adapt the paternal counsels to his own condition and capabilities.

parent or a master that made no scruple of falsehood or misrepresentation to serve his own purpose.

“‘Whatsoever things are *honest* and *just*.’ Let this be constantly borne in mind, to preserve you from the shameful dishonesty and injustice, too commonly practised in the present day, of entering into engagements which you cannot fulfil, of assuming appearances which your true condition does not warrant, and of indulging yourself in expenses which others must sustain. Be just and honest to yourselves: let not the enjoyments of one day defraud you of the comforts of another. Be just and honest to your creditors, and never think yourselves at liberty to spend what is theirs. Be just and honest to those you employ: give to your servants that which is just and equal, and see that it is paid in due time. Sleep not with the wages of a hireling in your possession, Lev. xix. 13. Be just and honest to your future family, and let not that money be spent on outward show which ought to be devoted to their education. Be just and honest to the claims of benevolence and religion, and be not selfishly satisfied that you owe no man anything, until you have rendered and fulfilled the debt of loving your neighbour as yourself, and doing for the souls and bodies of your fellow creatures, that which, with spiritually enlightened perceptions, you would think it right that they should do for you.

“‘Whatsoever things are *pure*.’ This part of your motto, faithfully observed, will preserve

your minds and lips from the indulgence and expression of folly and levity. It will keep far from your house the loose song, the profane jest, the filthy corrupting novel. It will preserve yourselves, and all under your influence, from the seductions of the theatre, and other scenes of dissipation, public and private, which would sully that purity of heart, without which none can enjoy the blessedness of seeing God.

“ ‘Whatsoever things are *lovely* and of *good report*.’ This will secure an amiable, generous, disinterested, delicate kindness of heart and behaviour to all around you. It will banish every thing harsh, forbidding, selfish, morose, and unlovely: it will present, in your character, a living, inviting picture of Christianity: it will obtain for you that which no Christian ought to be regardless of—a good name, and a good report, both of those who are within, and of the world in general. Covet, my dear children, the honour of securing the approbation of the wise and good, of constraining the concessions even of those who do not love religion; and take care that the commendations of those who see you at a little distance, shall never meet one contradicting sigh from those who observe you in all the closeness and constancy of every day domestic intercourse.

“ ‘If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,’ let every leisure moment be consecrated to devising and practising some virtuous, benevolent, and praiseworthy action; and let each have its due proportion, so that one duty shall

never be permitted to jostle out another, but your character and conduct present one consistent and attractive whole.

“Dare I proceed with the apostle?—‘Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.’ I hope I may, with sincerity and confidence, recommend to you my principles and endeavours, only charging upon you far to outstrip the example that has been set before you, and to press on to perfection. While it is your constant endeavour to live and act in correspondence with your motto, you will be daily more and more convinced of your need of the pardoning mercy and strengthening grace of Christ; you will live in habits of holy intercourse and communion with God, and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

The father’s parting advice was not lost on the young couple—the motto was adopted in sincerity: it proved their stimulus through the day, and their ground of self-examination at night; and their habitation was honourably distinguished as one of the tabernacles of the righteous, in which the voice of joy and salvation is heard.

EVENING III.

ON FAMILY PRAYER.

THE party having assembled at Mr. Reed's, Mr. Elliott, senior, introduced the subject proposed—that of Family Prayer—by relating two striking anecdotes, the first of which he stated to be well authenticated; the other occurred in a family with whom he was personally acquainted. Also a short extract from the Rev. Owen Stockton, on Family Instruction.

ANECDOTE ON FAMILY PRAYER.

A PIOUS tradesman, conversing with a minister on family worship, related the following instructive circumstances respecting himself.

“When I first began business for myself I was determined, through grace, to be particularly conscientious with respect to family prayer. Accordingly, I persevered for many years in the delightful practice of domestic worship. Morning and evening, every individual of my family was ordered always to be present: nor would I

allow my apprentices to be absent on any account. In a few years, the advantages of these engagements appeared manifestly conspicuous: the blessings of the upper and the nether springs followed me; health and happiness attended my family, and prosperity my business. At length, such was my rapid increase in trade, and the necessity of devoting every possible moment to my customers, that I began to think whether family prayer did not occupy too much of our time in the morning. Pious scruples arose respecting my intentions of relinquishing this part of my duty; but, at length, worldly interest prevailed so far, as to induce me to excuse the attendance of my apprentices; and not long after, it was deemed advisable, for the more eager prosecution of our business, to make the prayer with my wife, when we arose in the morning, suffice for the day. Notwithstanding the repeated checks of conscience that followed this base omission, the calls of a flourishing concern, and the prospect of an increasing family, appeared so imperious and commanding, that I found an easy excuse for this growing evil, especially as I did not omit prayer altogether. My conscience was now almost seared as with a hot iron, when it pleased the Lord to awaken me by a singular providence.

“One day, I received a letter from a young man, who had formerly been my apprentice, previous to my omitting family prayer. Not doubting but I continued domestic worship, his letter was chiefly on this subject; it was couched in the most affectionate and respectful terms: but

judge of my surprise and confusion, when I read these words:—‘Oh, my dear master, never, never shall I be able sufficiently to thank you for the precious privilege with which you indulged me in your family devotions! O, sir, eternity will be too short to praise my God for what I learned there. It was there I first beheld my lost and wretched state as a sinner; it was there that I first knew the way of salvation; and there that I first experienced the preciousness of Christ in me, the hope of glory. O, sir, permit me to say, never, never neglect those precious engagements: you have yet a family and more apprentices; may your house be the birth-place of their souls!’—I could read no further; every line flashed condemnation in my face; I trembled—I shuddered—I was alarmed at the blood of my children and apprentices, that I apprehended was soon to be demanded at my soul-murdering hands!

“Filled with confusion, and bathed with tears, I fled for refuge in secret: I spread the letter before God. I agonized, and—but you can better conceive than I can describe my feelings; suffice it to say, that light broke in upon my disconsolate soul, a sense of blood-bought pardon was obtained. I immediately flew to my family, presented them before the Lord; and from that day to the present I have been faithful; and am determined, through grace, that whenever business becomes too large to interfere with family prayer, I will give up the superfluous part of my business, and retain my devotion: better to lose a few shillings, than become the deliberate

murderer of my family, and the instrument of ruin to my own soul."

INSTANCE OF THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS
OF FAMILY PRAYER.

A YOUNG lady, the child of pious parents, had arrived at years of maturity, without apparently having any salutary impressions made on her mind, either by the instructions she had received, or the examples she had witnessed. She was not at all pious. In that state of mind she received the addresses of a gentleman destitute of religion, and who, probably, had not possessed her early advantages. He was moral, respectable, and honourable in social life, and had no idea that any thing more was necessary. In due time they were married.

The worth of any blessing is often best known by its loss. The very first day of her residence in the house of her husband, the young lady was struck with horror and distress at the omission of family prayers; that the family separated at night, and met in the morning, and no Bible was called for; no expressions of gratitude offered for protection and refreshment through the night; no supplication for provision, direction, and support through the day. She felt desolate and uncomfortable; and that which she had so long disregarded in the house of her father, seemed now absolutely essential to her comfort. The deficiency was the means of awakening in her mind deep and serious convictions of her

guilt, in having failed to improve the privileges with which she had so long been favoured. She was led to tremble at her awful state of guilt and danger as a sinner before God; she humbly and earnestly sought mercy through the blood of the cross, and found joy and peace in believing. Now, the instructions and admonitions of her pious parents, which had so long seemed to be like good seed rotting beneath the clods, began to spring up and yield fruit. She said, "The God of my parents shall be my God;" and she gave herself up to Him in a covenant never to be forgotten. She could not now be insensible to the best interests of her husband and family; these became matter of deep solicitude and fervent prayer. Her pious endeavours were blessed: her husband was awakened to discern the things that belonged to his everlasting peace, and was made a partaker of the grace of God in truth. Their household was soon numbered among those in whose tabernacles is heard the voice of rejoicing and salvation. They became eminently pious, exemplary, and useful characters, and trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Christian parents, it is sometimes your grief and complaint that you cannot give your children grace: but this you can do, and see that it is faithfully done; let your daily practice and example lodge in their hearts a conviction, that religion is a sacred, a needful, and a delightful thing; that it is the rule of your conduct, and the source of your happiness; and that it is a wretched and miserable thing to be without it.

Then may you hope that, sooner or later, those Divine influences which you can pray for, though you cannot command, will give vitality to your long-neglected instructions and examples; and that the children, over whom you have long mourned as aliens from God, shall become a seed to serve Him.

It can hardly be imagined, that the happy impression produced on the mind of this young lady, would have occurred in the case of a young person brought up in a family where domestic worship was made light of, irregularly engaged in, or caused to yield to the claims of worldly business, pleasure, or convenience. The responsibility of heads of families, in this particular, cannot be too often pressed upon their attention.

FAMILY INSTRUCTION.

Six benefits are obtained by instructing our children and servants. By instructing our families in the knowledge of the Scriptures, we not only procure much good to our children and servants, but also much benefit to our own souls.

I. The Lord hath promised a blessed life to those and their children, who instruct their children in his word; and that they shall enjoy a kind of heaven upon earth: Deut. xi. 18—21.

II. If we teach our families the commandments of God, and keep them ourselves, we shall be great in the kingdom of heaven, however low may be our condition in this world: Matt. v. 19; see also Matt. xxiv. 45—47.

HAPPY EFFECTS OF CONSISTENT PIETY. 53

III. Our children and servants will be great comforts and blessings to us, if we train them up in the fear of God: Prov. x. 1; xxix. 17; Phil. iii. 22.

IV. It will keep the memory and savour of God's word upon our own hearts, and excite in us a spiritual frame of heart, to be often teaching God's word to our families: Deut. iv. 9, 10.

V. It will be a great support and satisfaction in a dying hour, if our consciences bear us witness that they have been careful to train up those whom the Lord hath committed to our charge in the knowledge of his love: 2 Tim. ii. 3, 6; John xvii. 8—14.

VI. Such parents as are careful to instruct their families, and to train them up in the knowledge and fear of God, shall not only be blessed themselves, but they shall be great blessings to others: Gen. xviii. 18, 19.

OWEN STOCKTON.

The conversation which ensued, on the important topics of family prayer and instruction, brought to the recollection of one of the party an interesting fact; which, being related, was committed to paper, and entitled,

THE HAPPY EFFECTS OF CONSISTENT PIETY,

Exemplified in the Experience of a Poor Family.

A VILLAGE labourer visited a minister for pious conversation and prayer. He discovered much simple and steady piety, and conducted

himself as a follower of Christ. At this time he felt great anxiety about his wife, who he feared was not yet brought to a knowledge of the truth. He was encouraged to pray and hope on her behalf, to induce her as often as possible to attend the means of grace, and especially to render religion lovely in her eyes by the consistency and amiableness of his own deportment. Not more than a year elapsed before he came with tears of joy, desiring that his minister would converse with his wife, who, he had good reason to hope, was truly awakened to a concern about her immortal interests. This request was cheerfully complied with, when she made the following simple and affecting statement :—

“ In the first place, we were quite ignorant of religion, and then my husband and I consulted together, and we found the way we were going on in would not do.” This is just as it ought to be. Married people should consult together about all their affairs, especially about the most important of all—religion. When they do so, however ignorant they may be at first, there is good reason to hope they will be directed into the way of truth and peace, and prove helpers to each other in that way. This was a great step gained by their consultation—the decision that it would not do to go on any longer without religion. It was like the prodigal coming to himself; and we wonder not that the same happy resolution succeeded : “ I will arise, and go to my Father.” “ We thought,” continued the woman, “ that the — were as upright as any people we could see.” Dear reader, we do not

mention the particular denomination to which these people belong, for we have no wish to recommend or make proselytes to a sect or party ; but we do earnestly wish that when inquirers look around, they may be led to say of the professors of vital godliness, "They are the most upright people we can see." It is not loud talking about religion that will recommend it, half so much as the evidence of its excellency in the upright, consistent lives of those who profess it.

J. T— and his wife now regularly attended the preaching of the gospel ; and T— also became a constant and diligent scholar in the Sunday school, in order that he might be able to enjoy the reading as well as the hearing of God's holy word. Let not those who have hitherto lived in ignorance be discouraged from attempting to learn ; better late than never : much may be attained by determined diligence and perseverance. T— has now the privilege of reading the Bible to his wife and family, and of comparing what he hears with what he reads ; a pleasure he would never have enjoyed, if he had been too proud or too indolent to learn to read after he had grown up.

"My husband," continued Charlotte T—, "was soon brought under a conviction of his state. I was very sorry for him when I saw him in such distress, but did not think any thing about myself." It was well that she was thus kind and sympathizing, and not inclined to oppose and persecute her husband for that which she did not as yet fully understand. It secured to her his confidence, and very likely promoted

her own awakening. Concern of soul is not a fit subject for ridicule and mockery; and those who are disposed thus to treat it, had need beware lest their hands be made strong.

"At length," said she, "my husband was about joining the church, and a brother and sister were joined to the —; and then I began to think, How is it that I am altogether left out? and I prayed the Lord to make it known to me." Ah! this was the very time that poor James was praying so earnestly for her conversion; and here was the most delightful proof that his prayers were answered—she began to pray for herself. Well, let us all take encouragement to lay the case of unconverted relatives before Him, who will be known as a God hearing and answering prayer. But in what way were Charlotte T—'s prayers answered? Perhaps in a way she little expected. She proceeds: "He showed me I was such a sinner. I could see no escape; I thought I must perish, do what I would." This, though humbling and painful, was a truly profitable discovery. The Holy Spirit was now at work in her heart, producing that self-condemnation and self-despair which are absolutely necessary to our receiving the gospel message as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. "My husband prayed with me, and tried to explain the gospel to me; and we came to — as often as ever we could, to attend public worship and prayer meetings." Here it was pleasingly seen that two are better than one. He who had so anxiously prayed and watched for her conver-

sion, with delight observed the first indications of a hopeful change, and strove, by every means in his power, to foster the good beginning. The means he adopted were, in their own nature, suitable, and such as God has appointed, and on which He has promised his blessing. In his simple way, James T—endeavoured to explain the gospel to his wife; and sometimes even simple and unlearned people, possessed of native good sense and genuine piety, have a remarkable aptitude at conveying ideas to the minds of those with whom they familiarly associate, and can greatly assist each other in understanding and applying the instructions of the sanctuary. It is well, when the familiar intercourse of families is thus piously and profitably employed. James prayed with his wife; for he had found relief for his own sorrows and anxieties at the throne of grace, and he knew that Jesus was still exalted there a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. He also took her, as often as possible, to attend the preaching of the gospel and other means of grace. It is a kind thing in the father of a poor family, and one in which some pious men are not quite as considerate as they should be, to take a share in the duty of attending to young children, that the mother may not be deprived of her share in the privileges of the gospel. There is nothing selfish in religion, and its influence is at least as much displayed when we occasionally deprive ourselves of religious opportunities for the sake of others, as when we make every contrivance and exertion to enjoy them. "Faith

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17; and so in time it proved in the happy experience of C. T—, for, said she, "So I was led, by one degree and another, to see that Jesus Christ was quite able and willing to save me, though I did feel myself such a great sinner."

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation," teacheth us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," Titus ii. 11, 12. C. T—'s statement exactly corresponds with this: "I find a great change in my heart and inclinations from what it used to be. Merry-makings and dances, and such like, I used to be very fond of going to see; but now I can truly say, I hate them with a perfect hatred; I cannot bear the thoughts of them; I grieve and pity those that follow such things." Observe, she does not hate and despise, but grieves for and pities those whom she thinks wrong. This is the proper spirit to cherish; and a word of reproof or advice, dropped with this kindly feeling, is very likely, under the blessing of God, to find its way to the heart; while any harsh and scornful expression is much more likely to irritate than to reform. She then states her desire to approach God in his ordinances; but on what grounds did this poor woman express that wish? It was not that she expected thus to get her sins pardoned, and to make her peace with God; no, she indulged a humble hope that her sins were forgiven for the Saviour's sake, and she desired to live in obedience to his commands. "I do

believe in Jesus Christ with all my heart, for I know and feel that he has heard my prayers, and done for me just as his blessed word says." Here was, indeed, the inward witness to Christianity. The humble believer had indeed set to her seal that God is true; she had the record in herself, and a hundred volumes written on the truth of the gospel could not prove it half so much as a personal experience like this. Oh, if those wicked men, who disbelieve the Bible, and try to persuade others to disbelieve it too, could experience such an application of it to their hearts and consciences as this, they would no more doubt the Bible than doubt their own existence.

From personal and social, the good woman proceeded to domestic religion; and, indeed, that piety is worth very little that can rest satisfied without extending its influence in the domestic circle. "It is such a mercy," she observes, "that it pleased God to call us both, that we might lead our children in good ways while they are little." Christian parents, do not forget that you are made Christians not for your own sakes alone, but that you may become blessings to your children, and to all connected with you. O, strive together in this good work; be indeed help-meets to each other; and take the earliest opportunity of beginning it. It is a great matter indeed to begin with children "while they are little."

True religion is the source of happiness as well as holiness. The T— family have found it so. "No poor people can be happier than we. It

makes a great difference since we knew the Lord. We have but a moderate income, but the Lord makes us very comfortable with it." Yes, "godliness with contentment" is indeed "great gain." On inquiry into the "moderate" income of this family, it proves to vary from seven to nine shillings weekly, for the support of five individuals, with the prospect of an increasing family; and yet they are comfortable and happy; no people more so. Surely "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," Luke xii. 15. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked," Psa. xxxvii. 16. If the fretful, discontented children of luxury, who have more than heart can wish, and yet nothing with which the heart can be satisfied, would make the same blessed experiment, they would have reason to say, with this poor family, "It makes a great difference since we knew the Lord."

How beautifully does our Lord compare the progress of true religion, to the gradual, almost imperceptible, yet effectual diffusion of the leaven, by means of which a large mass of meal is changed! And how pleasingly is the comparison illustrated in this humble family, both when we consider what religion has done for the parents, and what it is calculated to do for the children. How it will, in all probability, affect their education, their habits, their future connexions in life! Nor does it stop here: already has the blessed leaven been extended beyond the cottage walls; one of the most profligate and desperate characters of the neighbourhood has felt its in-

fluence; and his dwelling, which was lately the abode of confusion and every evil work, has now become the residence of peace. The individual referred to was literally the terror of the neighbourhood, and especially of his own family. Whatever money he earned, he spent on his own vicious gratifications; and when it was exhausted, he came home to pour abuse and violence on his starving wife and children. This man worked with T—, and when the change in his character and habits began to be noticed, it furnished this wicked man with a constant theme for ridicule and opposition. Every species of petty persecution within his power was constantly exercised; but T— bore it all with silent meekness, for he had learned of Him “who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, he threatened not.” This patient endurance only exasperated the opposer the more. On one occasion, T— was placed in circumstances of affliction, which happened to come to the knowledge of his fellow labourer, who took the opportunity of taunting him with his poverty and affliction, saying, “What are you the better for your religion, since God does not love you well enough to spare you these troubles?” “Ah!” replied T—, “these troubles are no proof that God does not love me. Abraham was tried, and Job was tried, and yet both were the friends of God; besides, neighbour, though you are a stranger to religion, you are not a stranger to trouble. Look at your own cottage, there are trouble and misery enough there. I believe that my troubles come from the hand of God, and

that He will support me under them ; but where do your troubles come from ? Consider this ; and if you cannot tell me by to-morrow, I will tell you." This simple but firm reply struck on the man's heart and conscience. The more he thought, the more he felt conscious that he was the author of his own and his family's troubles ; and that he had not, like T—, a refuge to which to repair. He could no longer revile his godly neighbour, but sought his counsel, and desired to become a sharer in his privileges. To the great astonishment of his wife, on the following Saturday, he brought her the whole of his wages. He treated her and the children with kindness, to which they had been wholly unaccustomed. The following day, he accompanied T— to the public worship of God, where he has ever since been a constant attendant. Tears of penitence and gratitude are often seen rolling down his swarthy cheeks, and his eager fixed attention bespeaks a soul panting for eternal life. His feet have forsaken the threshold of the public-house, that grave of the poor man's happiness ; his own cottage, and the appearance of his wife and children, concur with his own altered demeanour, and pleasingly illustrate the sentiment—" If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17.

Do not these facts prove, that the gospel is the best adapted means for bettering the condition of the poor?

The reference to the children of this poor family, touched a string in the hearts of the young mothers, and led to a request, that the subject of parental solitudes, efforts, and encouragements, should be taken up at their next meeting. Mr. Reed, on whom it would have devolved to make some communication to the meeting, confessed his incompetence for entering on that subject; but hoped it would be taken up by some friend, qualified by age and experience to bring forward something interesting and instructive. He the rather urged this, as he should not be able to join the next party, having a long journey in contemplation, and, therefore, must needs pass by his turn of introducing a subject. Under these circumstances, all the party concurred in the hope that the elder parents would come prepared to communicate to the younger ones; and Mr. Reed was charged, while on his journey, to be treasuring up materials for some future social occasion.

EVENING IV.



FAMILY MERCIES ACKNOWLEDGED.

IN the interval between the last meeting and that at the house of the minister, Mr. Sharpe, one of the little ones of the family had been mercifully preserved in circumstances of danger. This circumstance, of course, formed a subject of grateful acknowledgment and congratulation, and led to the relation of several interesting facts, which were collected under the title of

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, MANIFESTED IN THE PRESERVATION OF INFANTS.

“THE Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works,” Psa. cxlv. 9; but, perhaps, in no instance is his constant and unwearied goodness more strikingly manifested, than in the preservation of so many millions of the human race, through the perils of helpless infancy and heedless childhood.

The diary of a good man, (Mr. John Machin, who died September 4, 1664,) records the following interpositions of Providence in behalf of

his family. The birth of his first child is thus mentioned:—

“Samuel, who was born November 13, 1653, chiefly called Samuel because he was asked of God, that he might be one to bear God’s name here in his church upon earth, and one to take up a room prepared for him in glory. The Lord be surety for thee, my son! the Lord forbid that thou shouldst come short of these ends! prayeth thy father. This child, in the first year of his life, was by sickness twice under the sentence of death; but prayer that obtained him, recovered him.” Another great deliverance to this child he thus records:—“Memorandum; July 10, 1656, the Lord prevented the death of my son Samuel, which, in all probability, might have been with my own hand. Bowling a stone, with all my might, towards the child, (whether I saw him before it went out of my hand, I know not, but) its motion was directly towards his face, coming up the steps in the garden walk; and the visible means of prevention, in God’s hand, was another stone that turned it out of the way, a few steps before it came to the child. This was an awakening providence to me and my wife, and sent us to God on our knees, partly for humiliation, partly for gratulation.” Again, speaking of the goodness of God, he writes:—“Let it be remembered to his praise, that October 23, 1661, my son John was within a step of drowning, and Providence ordered me to be within sight at that very time, though I had been from home the fortnight before. And not an hour after, my daughter Sarah was almost

choaked with a thread to our great affrightment. But we saw the Lord's hand very notably in the preservation, as we had done the spring before from sickness, in answer to our prayers: Psa. ciii. 1—4." Another merciful preservation of his son John, he thus records:—"Memorandum; that our son John had a most notable escape from drowning, as he and his brother were coming from school, June 18, 1664. But, blessed be God, who is present when parents are absent."

Perhaps almost every family has preserved, or ought to have preserved, such records; and even where no such particular instances of deliverance from visible dangers have occurred, we are sure of having been many times in circumstances of danger, which no human eye discerned, but which the hand of God averted; and such mercies ought to be gratefully acknowledged, and devoutly improved.

"That Divine Providence," says a good man, "which supports children in their childhood, and carries them through that helpless age; which puts it into the hearts of parents to provide for them; which preserves to them their limbs and senses, of which they might, by a thousand accidents, be deprived in a moment; by which they grow in strength and stature; this we have all experienced ourselves, and we must acknowledge it with thankfulness to the Redeemer's praise." And elsewhere:—"What a merciful and tender care Divine Providence took of us, at our entrance into the world! Why were we not cut off as soon as we were born?

Not because we did not deserve it : justly might such weeds have been plucked up as soon as they appeared ; justly might such cockatrices have been crushed in the egg. Nor because we did, or could, take any care of ourselves, and our own safety ; no creature comes into the world so helpless and shiftless, as man. It was not our might, or the power of our hand, that preserved us these beings ; but God's power and providence upheld our frail lives, and his pity and patience spared our forfeited lives. It was owing to this that 'the knees prevented us.' Natural affection is put into parents' hearts by the God of nature ; and to this, under God, we are indebted for the preservation, the sustenance, and the comforts of our infancy."

The affectionate attention and unwearied care of tender parents, demands from their offspring the constant returns of gratitude, love, and obedience ; and, "a consideration of the gracious care, which Divine Providence took of us in our birth and infancy, should engage us to early piety, and constant devotedness to his honour. He that was our help from our birth, should be our hope from our youth. If we received so much mercy from God, before we were capable of doing him any service, we should lose no time when we are capable." And the temporal blessings we have received at his hands, should encourage us to apply to him for spiritual blessings ; for He who feeds the young ravens which cry, and who sustained our infant lives when we were incapable of knowing him, will never reject the soul that seeks his mercy in Christ

Jesus ; nor withhold his Holy Spirit from them that ask him.

It was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. Sharpe to assemble their family for evening worship at a very early hour, that the children might be permitted to share the privilege. They were, therefore, present while the above paper was read, and appeared to listen to it with deep attention, as also to the portion of Scripture, and the simple, fervent, devout petitions and acknowledgments which succeeded it. Thus were they taught to associate the instructive remarks of their parents and friends, the sacred truths of Scripture, and the feelings breathed in prayer, with the mercy recently experienced among themselves ; and thus, it may be hoped, impressions were left upon their young minds, by the power of the Holy Spirit setting home the words, which, in the families of the truly and consistently pious, "drop as the rain, and distil as the dew," and are identified with the actual circumstances, whether afflicting or pleasing, in which parents and children are immediately interested. It cannot be supposed, that pious parents ever forget to acknowledge the special mercies of God vouchsafed to their families ; but they are not always sufficiently alive to the importance of having the children, even very young children, present ; and thus an important opportunity is lost, of impressing upon their minds a sense of the relation between the providence and the word of God ; how the one is the expositor of the other, and how both concur

in teaching the Christian how to walk with God. Very young children are capable of noticing these things; and it is not for us to say at how early an age they are capable of receiving saving impressions from them. Instances might be given, of persons who through life retained a lively recollection of acts of devotion associated with family mercies, which took place when they were less than two years of age. Blessed are the pious parents who sow beside all waters; who in the morning sow the seed, and in the evening hold not their hand, Isa. xxxii. 20; Eccles. xi. 6.

From the expressions of parental gratitude for providential mercies, the transition was easy to the parental duties of instruction and discipline. This elicited from one and another of the party remarks, anecdotes, and sketches, which agreeably occupied the remainder of the evening.

THE INFLUENCE OF PIOUS MOTHERS.

FACTS often carry more force than arguments. Bishop Hall, speaking in tender and affectionate terms of his mother, says:—"How often have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity, which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass without being much engaged in private devotion! Never have any lips read to me such feeling lectures of piety as hers. In a word, her life and death were saint-like."

Philip Henry, usually called, on account of the spirituality of his mind and the amiableness

of his conduct, the "heavenly Henry," was, in his earliest years, trained up by his fond parents in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and he retained to the end of life a lively and grateful sense of the benefit thus received. "If ever," says he, "any child, such as I was, between the tenth and fifteenth year of my age, enjoyed line upon line, and precept upon precept, I did : and was it in vain ? I trust not altogether in vain. My soul rejoiceth and is glad at the remembrance of it. The word distilled as the dew, and dropped as the rain. Bless the Lord, O my soul ; as long as I live I will bless the Lord ; I will praise my God while I have my being. Had it been only the restraint that it laid upon me, whereby I was kept from the common sins of other children and youth, such as cursing and swearing, and sabbath-breaking, I was bound to be very thankful. But that it prevailed, through grace, effectually to bring me to God, how much am I indebted to Him ! what shall I render to Him !"

Mr. Gilpin gives a pleasing picture of the attention given by Mrs. Gilpin to the education of his excellent son, especially in the earlier stages of the work. "She was skilled in all the proper methods of dealing with his gentle spirit, and could elevate his yielding thoughts to God by the most familiar representations. She knew all the direct approaches to his heart, and was constantly watching the most favourable opportunities for making serious impressions on his mind. By her intimate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, she was prepared to entertain

him with narratives of the most interesting kind; while, by her piety, she was enabled to turn that entertainment to some profitable purpose. Methinks I see him, at this moment, sitting in his little chair by the side of his tender guardian, and listening to her instructions with a face full of eager attention. Many a time have I seen her so occupied, while I have silently solicited a blessing upon their happy employment. Such were our joint labours, to raise our willing child, step by step, towards the fountain-head of blessedness; and our efforts were crowned with more than ordinary success."

We are not warranted to conclude, that early religious instruction is all lost, even when it seems so. The precious seed often lies long hid under ground, but springs up at last. One of the most touching passages in the confessions of the celebrated Augustine, is that in which he speaks of the tender solicitude of his devout mother, and owns the influence which her prayers and tears had, in checking his licentious course, and changing his views and pursuits. The late venerable John Newton, in the narrative of his eventful life, expresses the most ardent regard for his revered mother. She made it her chief business and pleasure to instruct her only child in the elements of religious knowledge. She stored his memory with whole chapters of Scripture, with catechisms and hymns, and left no means untried to impress upon his mind the truths of Christianity. This excellent parent he lost when he was but seven years old. Plunged into a wicked world, his youth and mature years

were given up to almost every kind of vice and profligacy; yet he acknowledges, that after he was reclaimed by the grace of God, the instructions given in his childhood vividly recurred to his recollection, and were of considerable use to him. Gilbert West was at one time warped into the labyrinth of infidelity. But he did not feel at ease in his unbelief. The lingering impressions of reverence, made by maternal tuition, could never be quite effaced. In a letter to Dr. Doddridge, he says :—" I cannot help noticing, on this occasion, your remarks on the advantage of an early education in the principles of religion, because I have myself happily experienced it; since I owe to the early care of a most excellent woman, my mother, that bent and bias to religion, which, with the co-operating grace of God, hath, at length, brought me back to those paths of peace, from which I might have otherwise been in danger of deviating for ever. The parallel betwixt me and Colonel Gardiner was, in this instance, too striking not to affect me exceedingly."

MATERNAL INFLUENCE.

THE following interesting facts and judicious observations, from the pen of the Rev. Richard Cecil, and of his biographer, the Rev. Josiah Pratt, cannot be too widely circulated, for the encouragement of Christian parents to be faithful and diligent in their endeavours for the spiritual good of their children, and still to persevere, and

pray, and hope, even under the most discouraging appearances.

"Many of the mothers of the saints in 'old time,' also, were 'holy women, who trusted in God,' and, without doubt, instructed their children in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, as well as walked in them themselves.

"Among these were Sarah, Rebekah, the mother of Moses, Hannah, king Lemuel's mother, Elizabeth, and both the mother and grandmother of Timothy.

"From the appellation which David, in Psa. cxvi. 16, bestows upon his mother, we may venture to conclude, that she, too, was of the number. He seems to connect in his mind, as we have heard a pious man remark, the mention of his mother's name with that of his conversion, as if she had been the instrument in the Lord's hands of effecting it.

"It is very probable that Hezekiah's mother also was a believer, as she was the daughter of Zechariah, the good priest 'who had understanding in the visions of God;' and therefore brought up her child in those ways which, we may suppose, were the means of his being so very different a character to his wicked father, Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxvi. 5; xxix. 1: see also xxi. 6; xxii. 3.

"Christian parents, and especially Christian mothers, may gather from the history of our departed friend every possible encouragement to the unwearied care of their children. While Saint Augustine, Bishop Hall, Richard Hooker, John Newton, Richard Cecil, and many other

great and eminent servants of Christ, have left on record their grateful acknowledgments to their pious mothers, as the instruments, under the grace and blessing of God, of winning them to himself, let no woman of faith and prayer despair respecting her most untoward child.

"Mr. Cecil's mother was a woman of real piety. Her family, for generations back, were pious characters. It was a special mercy to Mr. C. that his mother was a partaker of the same grace with her ancestors. She laboured early to impress his mind, both by precept and example; she bought him Janeway's 'Token for Children,' which greatly affected him, and made him retire into a corner to pray; but his serious beginnings wore off, and he at length made such progress in sin, that he gloried in his shame.

"Lying one night in bed, he was contemplating the case of his mother. 'I see,' said he to himself, 'two unquestionable facts: first, my mother is greatly afflicted in body and mind, and yet I see that she cheerfully bears up under all, by the support she derives from constantly retiring to her closet and her Bible; secondly, that she has a secret spring of comfort of which I know nothing, while I, who seek pleasure by every means, seldom or never find it. If, however, there is any such secret in religion, why may not I attain it as well as my mother? I will immediately seek it of God.' He instantly rose in his bed, and began to pray. But he was soon damped in his attempt, by recollecting that much of his mother's comfort seemed to arise from her faith in Christ. 'Now,' thought

he, 'this Christ have I ridiculed. He stands much in my way, and can form no part of my prayers.' In utter confusion of mind, therefore, he lay down again. Next day, however, he continued to pray to 'the Supreme Being.' He began to consult books, and to attend preachers: his difficulties were gradually removed, and his objections answered, and his course of life began to amend. He now listened to the pious admonitions of his mother, which he had before affected to receive with pride and scorn: yet they had fixed themselves in his heart, like a barbed arrow; and though the effects were, at the time, concealed from her observation, yet tears would fall from his eyes as he passed along the streets, from the impressions she had left on his mind. Now he would discourse with her, and hear her without outrage; which led her to hope that a gracious principle was forming in his heart, and more especially as he then attended the preaching of the word. Thus he made some progress; but felt no small difficulty in separating from his favourite connexions. Light, however, broke into his mind, till he gradually discovered that Jesus Christ, so far from 'standing in his way,' was the *only* way, the truth, and the life, to *all* that come unto God by Him.

"My first convictions on the subject of religion were confirmed, from observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them, which I had felt that the vanities of the world could not give. I shall never forget standing by the bed of my sick mother.

‘Are not you afraid to die?’ I asked her.—‘No.’ ‘No! why, does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?’—‘No; because God has said to me, “Fear not: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” The remembrance of this scene has oftentimes since drawn an ardent prayer from me, that I might die the death of the righteous.’ The seeds sown in tears by his inestimable mother, though long buried, now burst into life, and shot forth with vigour; and he became a preacher of that truth he once laboured to destroy.

“‘Where parental influence does not convert, it hampers—it hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother, who dropped things in my way: I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel; but then I liked to be an infidel in company, rather than when alone: I was wretched when by myself. These principles and maxims spoiled my pleasure. With my companions I would sometimes stifle them; like embers, we kept one another warm. Besides, I was a sort of hero; I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and I had to maintain a character before them: but I could not divest myself of my better principles. I went with one of my companions to see the “Minor;” he could laugh heartily, but I could not: the ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him—to me it was none; it could not move my features. *He* knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation—I

did. I knew there was such a thing. I was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man—it harasses him—it throws itself constantly in his way.”

ANECDOTES, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE
OF PARENTAL COUNSEL AND DISCIPLINE.

A MOTHERLESS BOY.

WHEN I was a little child, said a good man, my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and to place her hand upon my head while she prayed. Before I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was left much to my own guidance. Like others, I was inclined to evil passions, but often felt myself checked, and, as it were, drawn back by the soft hand on my head. When I was a young man, I travelled in foreign lands, and was exposed to many temptations; but, when I would have yielded, that same hand seemed to be on my head, and I was saved. I appeared to feel its pressure as in the days of my happy infancy, and sometimes there came with it a voice in my heart—a voice that must be obeyed, “Oh, do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against thy God.”

A DYING CHILD.

A CHILD, who had been trained in the ways of religion, by a parent who was kind, but judiciously firm, as she sunk to rest in peaceful reliance on her Saviour's love, affectionately

thanked her beloved mother for all her tender care and kindness ; but added, " I thank you most of all, for having subdued my self-will."

MATERNAL INSTRUCTION ; OR, THE RESERVOIR.

RELATED BY MISS SHIRLEY.

THE spring which supplies our city with the purest and most delicious water, rises on the side of a hill about three miles distant ; a small building encloses the works by which the water is always kept to a certain height, and thence it is conveyed in pipes, which pass under the bed of the river, and supply a celebrated pump in the centre of the town. This wonderful contrivance had often been a subject of conversation and curiosity among us young ones ; and, at length, we prevailed on our beloved mother to accompany us to the spot ; and most eager were we to catch the first sight of the building, notwithstanding her assurances that we should find little to gratify our curiosity, as the works were carefully concealed from public view. We found it exactly as she had described ; nothing more than a small rude stone building, with one massy door, plated with iron, and not a single aperture excepting the key-hole, by which we could peep at the internal movements of the concern. We could, however, distinctly hear both the murmuring and the trickling of water within ; and some of us fancied that by peeping in at the key-hole we could see it drip. We quitted the

place with feelings of disappointment, and were not very sparing of our censures against the meanness of permitting so useful a concern to present so shabby an outside, and the illiberality of keeping it so closely locked up from the inspection of visitors. Our mother, however, who had a knack of turning little things to account, said she hoped it would impress on our minds the sentiment she had often expressed, "Never despise any thing from the meanness of its outward appearance." Very valuable things often present a mean, unattractive exterior: for example, a coal-pit, an iron-mine, compared with a flowery landscape; a plain working bee, with a showy butterfly; this reservoir with a tasty summer house. "I do not intend," said my mother, "to object against useful things having an agreeable exterior, but merely to plead that they should not be despised for the lack of it. I have sometimes known young people treat with coldness and indifference, if not with disrespect, persons of real worth, and capable of imparting much valuable information, merely on account of their plain dress or unpolished manners; and probably by such conduct the young people themselves have been serious losers."

Not long afterwards I was reminded of my mother's observation; for a very plain elderly gentleman, with dusty gaiters, called at our house; his appearance was so shabby and old-fashioned, that I felt scarcely disposed to admit him; but, to my great surprise, my parents received him very cordially. He staid at our house several days, during which time we were

all delighted with his conversation. Whether it turned on natural science, mechanics, manufactures, history, or books, he was never at a loss, but always instructive and entertaining. He was, however, most at home when religion was the theme; and then it really seemed something like the disciples walking to Emmaus in company with their Lord; our hearts burned within us while he talked with us, and opened to us the Scriptures. Almost before there had been time to brush the good old man's clothes, we had forgotten that they were dusty; and, afterwards, we almost respected the dust of his feet, when we learned that he had acquired it by taking a long journey on foot for a benevolent object, the funds of which he was unwilling to lessen for his own accommodation.

But to return to our walk. Some of us inquired who had possession of the keys, and whether it would be possible, by proper application, to obtain access to the reservoir. My mother informed us that the keys were most likely in the custody of the mayor, or some other proper officer, and she did not think it likely that such a permission would be granted for the mere gratification of curiosity; very great caution, she said, was observed in such things, and the place, she imagined, was never resorted to but when it was really necessary.

"But why," my brother asked, "need they be so very cautious? What harm could be done by merely looking at it?"

"Think," replied my mother, "of the vast importance of a regular and wholesome supply

of water to the numerous inhabitants of a city. Think of the possibility of an accident, and the inconvenience that would arise if they should be deprived of it, though but for a few hours. Besides, in the time of war, how is the importance of this invaluable necessary of life enhanced! Suppose a city besieged by enemies, how long it might hold out if water were plentiful! How much easier would it be to subsist on a scanty supply of solid food, or to turn to account food of an inferior quality, than to find any substitute for water! But suppose the enemy should gain access to the reservoir, and either cut off the supply or poison the streams, what must be the consequence?"

We all shuddered at the thought, and my mother seized the moment of thoughtfulness and solemnity, to call to our recollection that precept of the wisest of men, Prov. iv. 23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." "You have been surprised," my children, said she, "to think how far the water from this reservoir is carried. You are convinced of the importance of its being constantly conveyed, and of its purity being preserved; now think of our hearts as moral fountains, the extensive and important influence of whose streams are beyond calculation. A corrupt fountain cannot send forth a salubrious stream, nor a pure fountain a corrupt stream. As our hearts are, so will be our conversation, our practice, our example; for 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,' foolishness, and wickedness of every description, Mark vii. 21—23. 'The wicked

is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring—like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,' Prov. xxv. 26; Isa. lvii. 20. What an awful thing it would be to render a family miserable by our evil tempers and practices, or to poison them by our corrupt example! On the other hand, how delightful to scatter benefits and blessings as we go; to instruct, to improve, to make happy all with whom we are connected! 'The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death,' Prov. xiii. 14. Only think that all this must depend on the state of our hearts! Unless the heart be purified by Divine grace, there is no dependence on mere external decency and loveliness. It is seldom really valuable, useful, or abiding. How suitable, then, the petition, 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit!'

"You readily admitted the necessity of securing this fountain from the approach of an enemy, who might cut off the supplies, or infuse poison into them; nor is it less necessary to guard our hearts from temptation. We have one great enemy always on the watch to corrupt and pollute our minds; and he has many agents, whom he employs to effect his purposes unperceived and unsuspected. A bad book, an evil companion, our own peculiar constitution, temper, or circumstances, may prove the means or the occasion of poisoning our souls, and infecting all with whom we are connected. Surely, it becomes us to be sober and vigilant, to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation.

“ We know but little of the hearts of our fellow creatures ; let us be at once cautious and candid in forming our opinions of them. An attractive exterior may conceal much baseness and danger : let us not be hastily won by much fair speaking, nor form an intimate acquaintance with any but those who show out of a good conversation their works with meekness and wisdom, and prove that the fountain is good by the purity of its streams ; at the same time, candour requires that we should always assign to the actions of others the best motives they will bear. But for ourselves, alas ! we know but little, too little of our own hearts ; and yet that little is enough to convince us that they are ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,’ Jer. xvii. 9. It is a mercy that the key is in the hands of ONE who perfectly understands them, and who never refused the prayer of sincerity and faith : ‘ Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,’ Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24 —everlasting ! yes, my dear children, the results of human character, actions, and examples, whether good or evil, will be everlasting ; and hence the poisoning of one soul, and the fatal consequences resulting from one evil example, may be more than the poisoning this fountain, though it should convey death to all the hundreds who drink of it ; for what is the termination of the natural life a few days prematurely, compared with plunging the immortal spirit into everlasting misery ! I hope and trust we shall never

think lightly of conduct or example, which may live and operate after we are dead, and the effects of which may follow us into eternity. Happy indeed will it be for us, and for all whom our example may influence, if the grace of God is imparted to us, and is in us as 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life,'" John iv. 14.

Since this conversation we have several times visited the city reservoir; never, I believe, without calling to mind some of our mother's observations. I hope they have not been altogether lost on us; and it would afford great happiness, both to my mother and myself, if they should prove the means of leading any other person to keep diligently a heart out of which are the issues of life.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO PERSEVERANCE IN PIOUS EFFORTS.

I.—THE DISTRESS OF A CHRISTIAN PARENT.

SOME years since, a minister was preaching on the joys of that heavenly inheritance which is the portion of all the saints of God. Among his hearers sat a venerable pair of aged pilgrims, just about to set their feet on the threshold of their celestial home; and their son, a thoughtless, dissipated youth, the grief of their aged hearts, on whom all their pious efforts seemed to have been thrown away. As the preacher expatiated on the glories and felicities of the heavenly world—"Ah!" thought the youth, "this will just suit

my parents." He looked to them, expecting to see on their countenances the expressions of rapture and delight; but, to his great astonishment, they were both bathed in tears. At the close of the service, when they returned home, a remarkable expression of pensiveness and dejection sat on the countenance of each parent, which the youth knew not how to account for. At length, addressing his mother, he said, "How is it, mother, that you appear so gloomy? you always told me that religion made people happy. Now, though you have been hearing so much about the joys in heaven, both you and my father appear quite miserable and melancholy." "True, my dear child," replied the mother, "the hope of heaven is indeed enough to make us happy; but—the thought of missing you there—it is this which makes us melancholy." The touching sentiment found its way to his heart; the youth too retired, and wept, and prayed that his parents' God would be his God, their portion his portion, and that they might meet at last a family unbroken in the skies. From that time he became a changed character; and his aged parents were not called from earth, until on his behalf they could say with Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," Luke ii. 29.

Let Christian parents be encouraged still to pray, and hope, and endeavour, even under the most discouraging circumstances. Often has it been seen, that those who have long sown in tears, at length have reaped with joy.

II.—THE FATHER'S DYING BED.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

AMONG the many instances we meet with that confirm the truth of this statement, the following fact, related by a well-known and excellent minister, the late Rev. J. Griffin, of Portsea, is not the least remarkable :—

A truly pious and excellent pair, who had conscientiously laboured to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, setting before them holy examples, and constantly committing them to God in earnest prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace, were exercised with the very heavy affliction of seeing two of their sons men of Belial in every sense. They threw off parental restraint, entirely forsook the habits of piety in which they had been trained, pursued vice and iniquity with greediness, and at length endeavoured to stifle all the remonstrances of conscience which interrupted them in their sins, by persuading themselves that their parents' religion was all a dream and a delusion, and that there was no future life in which they would be called to account for the actions of this. Every means had been tried to arrest and reclaim the wretched wanderers at every step of their devious way. Parents had expostulated, and entreated, and wept, and prayed. Ministers and Christian friends had conversed or written, had reasoned, exhorted, and pleaded by every argument that might be expected to alarm or allure; so deeply was

Christian sympathy excited for the afflicted parents, that many especial prayer meetings were held to implore that their aged hearts might yet be consoled by the return of their wretched prodigals. But all these pious endeavours on their behalf only served as subjects of mockery to the wicked young men ; nothing seemed to awaken, nothing to melt their obdurate hearts.

At length the venerable father, almost broken-hearted on their account, sunk into threatening disease, attended also by mental depression bordering upon despondency. It was evident to all around that the shades of death were gathering round him : and now his sons so far yielded to the dictates of natural affection, as frequently to watch beside his dying bed ; but they expressed no remorse for their past conduct, nor could any thing induce them to revisit the house of prayer, to read the Scriptures, or to be present at any act of devotion. Surrounding friends watched with trembling anxiety the effect that might be produced on their minds, by witnessing the death of a Christian ; and they fervently implored, perhaps in a spirit too much like that of dictation, that the end of the saint might be peaceful and triumphant, and that thus his erring children might be convinced of the truth and excellency of his religion ; but gloom still prevailed, he feared that he had been deceiving himself and others, and that eternity to him was arrayed in all its terrors. Still prayer ascended, that some ray of heavenly light might burst upon his final hour, and dispel the gloom ere yet he entered upon the invisible glories of the heavenly world.

But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, Isa. lv. 9. To the very last the good man was harassed with fearful apprehensions, and departed without one expression of consolation and joy. His ungodly sons were present. After their parent had expired, they sat by his bedside for more than an hour in silent horror, and were at length with difficulty prevailed upon to withdraw. They retired together, and having again sat a considerable time in profound silence, one of them thus addressed the other :—" Brother, if our father, who through life was so upright, holy, and exemplary, endured all these terrors in the prospect of death and eternity, what will be endured by such wretches as you and myself?" The sentiment was reciprocal. Each was overwhelmed with the anguish of personal guilt and danger, and falling down together, they uttered their broken cries for mercy. The impression, happily, was not more deep than durable: from that hour they became earnest seekers of salvation; humble, penitent, consistent servants of God, the joy and solace of their widowed mother's heart, the props and ornaments of the church of God, in the place of him who through their crimes had gone down mourning to the grave, but whose heavenly bliss was doubtless enhanced by the joyful news of their conversion.

III.—DELIVERANCE IN THE LAST EXTREMITY.

THE same minister, the late Rev. John Griffin, of Portsea, who for many years laboured with great success in that sea-port town, some

time since also related the following affecting facts :—

A pious and wealthy gentleman, resident in one of the midland counties, had two sons, who, as they grew up, to the great grief of their religious parents, desired to cast off the observances and restraints to which a pious education had accustomed them. In various ways they interrupted the pious harmony of the family by their habits and associates; but one particular source of contention was, the constant desire of the young men to be indulged with the use of the family carriage on the Lord's day. This the father steadily refused; declaring that, though his sons might break his heart by their sabbath-breaking, and other misconduct, he would not be accessory to their guilt, by permitting his horses and servants to be employed in their service on that sacred day. The young men were exceedingly exasperated at the refusal, and declared their intention of immediately leaving home, abandoning their prospects for life, and going to sea as common sailors. Remonstrance was in vain; and they accordingly went. The parents having gained some intimation of their track, wrote to the minister above alluded to, stating that they believed the young men were then in the town where he resided, and entreated him to find them out, and, if possible, persuade them to abandon their foolish and undutiful purpose; urging especially that the tender mother was so severely affected by their conduct, that it was to be feared her life, or her reason, would sink under the stroke.

With some difficulty the minister found them out, and earnestly pleaded with them, by every motive of duty and interest, especially dwelling on the tender claims of their affectionate parents. At the mention of his mother's agonized feelings and precarious state of health, the younger son was melted, and consented to return; but the other declared his stubborn, irrevocable purpose to quit his parents' protection and his native land. "Well, then," said the minister, "if you are determined to go, at all events leave this mean lodging: come to my house, and let me procure you an appointment, and fit you out as a gentleman." "No!" replied the hardened youth, "I am determined to go in the capacity of a common sailor, and its destitution of every accommodation, because I know it will be mortifying and painful to the feelings of my parents to know that their eldest son is gone out in such a capacity, and in such circumstances." "Then, young man," replied the minister, "if such is your determination, go: but remember, that the eye of God is upon you; and 'Be sure your sin will find you out.'"

Several years elapsed, and the tender parents made continual inquiries, but in vain; never could they gain any trace of their long-lost prodigal. At length, they concluded he must have come to an early death, and that it would be theirs to go down to the grave sorrowing for their son.

Very early one morning the family of the minister was roused by a sailor, who desired immediately to speak to Mr. Griffin on business of the

greatest importance. Mr. Griffin got up, and the sailor entreated him immediately to accompany him to a ship stationed in the port, where a young man under sentence of death earnestly entreated to see him. He readily complied; and on being introduced to the condemned man, found him under great distress of mind on account of sin. After directing his views to the guilty sinner's only Refuge, the minister inquired what induced the unhappy man to send for him in particular? had he ever, when on shore, heard him preach? "No, never." How then did he know anything of him? "Sir," said the poor fellow, "do you not recollect, so many years ago, receiving a letter from Mr. —, of —, requesting you to interest yourself on behalf of his two ungodly sons?" "I do, perfectly well; and I now recollect that you are the one of those young men who persisted in going the way of his own perverseness." "Yes, sir, I am; and, as you said, 'The eye of God has been upon me, and my sin has found me out.'"

The young man related the circumstances through which he had past. Before he entered the navy he so far relented from his bitter determination of wounding the feelings of his parents to the uttermost, that he entered under an assumed name: this accounted for the parents never having been able to trace him. He had been through many dangers and hardships, but had conducted himself well, and obtained promotion. The offence for which he was about to suffer was one of insubordination or disobedience, which having been of frequent occurrence,

and productive of serious mischief, it had been resolved to make an example of the very first who repeated it; and this unhappy young man had exposed himself to the dreadful penalty. He expressed the deepest penitence for all his past misconduct, and a most earnest desire once more to see his aged father, to implore his forgiveness.

After further conversation and prayer, the minister left him, but not without a resolution to make every effort on his behalf, if it were possible, to obtain a reverse, or mitigation of his sentence. He first stated the case to the officers of the ship; they listened with deep interest and sympathy to the melancholy tale, but declared their full persuasion that all application for mercy would be in vain, as it was considered absolutely necessary to make an example of severity against that particular offence. Distressed, but not in despair, the good man addressed a line to the parents of the unhappy convict, and then set off to London to make strenuous efforts on his behalf. With considerable difficulty, he obtained an interview with the person in his Majesty's government through whom such affairs are transacted; he laid before him all the circumstances of the young man and his family; stated some extenuating facts connected with his present offence, and intimated the probability that, if spared, he might become a valuable member of society. The noble lord promised to exert himself to the uttermost, but feared it was too late, as the warrant for execution had been just sent down; he expected an interview with the king that day, and hoped that the facts he had to re-

present might induce him to reverse the sentence; the great fear was, that no new communication could reach the spot in time to prevent the execution of the previous order; he, however, furnished the necessary authority to suspend the execution until his Majesty's pleasure could be known, and urged the minister instantly to hasten down, and deliver it to the commanding officer. It needed not to urge his speed; he left town instantly, travelled all night, and reached home with the dawn of the morning. He had no sooner arrived than a messenger followed him with a pardon! So successful and so speedy had been the exertions of the humane nobleman!

With trembling agitation, the minister hastened to the harbour: he saw the vessels drawn out—the yellow flag flying—the men on deck—the guns pointed—every indication that the execution was just about to take place. Agonized, lest he should hear the signal gun ere he could reach the ear or the eye of the commanding officer, he hurried on board. Ascending the ladder, he met a venerable old man in deep distress, yet with an expression of holy resignation on his countenance. It was the pious father, who had just taken leave of his condemned prodigal, and left him in the hands of the ministers of justice, who were about to lead him forth to execution. A few moments more found the father and son once more locked in each other's arms, not in the agonies of a final separation, but with the joyful consciousness that his son who was dead was alive again, and he who had been lost was found. A few hours restored the prodigal to the

embraces of his injured but forgiving mother, and to the privileges of that home, from which he had so long alienated himself; and the subsequent conduct of both the brothers justified the pleasing hope, that they were indeed true and spiritual penitents. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zech. iii. 2.

This anecdote affords encouragement to pious parents still to pray, and hope, and strive for the most rebellious and seemingly hopeless children. Who knows the power of persevering prayer? Who can tell how far God's uttermost may go?

It affords encouragement to the penitent rebel to seek the throne of mercy, even from the very lowest depths of misery and ruin to which his sins may have brought him. In the deepest extremity, let him remember his father's God, whom he has so long rebelled against. Let him send to Heaven a cry for mercy in the Saviour's name, and he will find that the God in whom his pious parents trusted is still a God hearing and answering prayer.

Yet it affords no encouragement to those who still persist in their guilty wanderings. Let them stop ere it be too late, nor dare any longer to dance on the brink of everlasting misery. The long-suffering goodness of God is calculated to lead to repentance; if not, it proves but as oil to the flames of Divine vengeance, which will at last devour the adversary; and the hardened and impenitent heart of the sinner will be found to have been busying itself in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5.

IV.—THE ALTERED SOLDIER.

A YOUTH, who had been piously educated, very contrary to the wishes and feelings of his kind friends, entered the army. At first, he retained some of those habits, feelings, and scruples, which the child of pious parents cannot easily shake off. The low song, the indecent jest, the profane oath, he too often heard, at first struck him with disgust and horror. When he beheld the awfully prevalent disregard of the sabbath among his comrades, he felt lonely and gloomy, and sighed for the pious cheerfulness which characterized that sacred day at home. He frequently received letters, especially from a pious sister, affectionately urging upon him the importance of real religion, and warning him of the peculiar snares and dangers to which the situation he had chosen especially exposed him. At first these letters were welcome, and served to quicken his feelings, and strengthen his resolutions, on the side of virtue; but he had not been long in the army before the example and the ridicule of evil companions prevailed against the restraints of education. By associating with transgressors he learned their ways, and got a snare to his soul. When he began to *laugh* at the rude jest he once abhorred, and then to *repeat* it, his sister's letters were no longer acceptable—they interrupted his guilty pleasures. They were hastily read, quickly put out of sight, and scarcely ever answered. His affectionate sister became alarmed, and wrote yet more earnestly, pleading with him, and setting

before him the dreadful consequences of sin. These letters startled him; but he had so far plunged into vice, and given himself up to the snares of the devil, to be led captive by him at his will, that the question no longer was, Whether he should obey the dictates of conscience, and reason, and Scripture; whether he should forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding: but, How he should turn aside admonition, and stifle conscience, and drink in iniquity with greediness, and sin without disturbance; and, alas! his proficiency and success advanced with awful rapidity. He had walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and stood in the way of sinners, and he soon sat in the seat of the scornful. He persuaded himself, after many struggles, that the Bible was not true, that there was no God to mark his actions, no day of judgment, no state of retribution, no world after this. He gloried in the discovery, and often said to his jovial companions, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Still he could not quite shake off a creeping horror when he thought of death; but it was at a very far distant to-morrow that he expected it would really arrive; and he dismissed, as quickly as he could, every intruding thought of the evil day. Loss of principle and habits of vice mutually promote each other. The love of vice saps the foundation of principle; the weakening of principle leaves the sinner at liberty to pursue all uncleanness with greediness. It was thus with the youth in question; vice led him to find the restraints of religion inconvenient, and

to wish to cast them off. Having, as he thought, succeeded in his bold attempt, he aspired after distinction in wickedness. No ordinary degrees could satisfy his bold presumptuous mind. It became his glory to be the ringleader in every species of wickedness, and he even challenged his companions to the invention of abominable excesses and unheard-of profanity. The letters of his pious relatives were not now suffered to disturb his guilty career. They were laid aside as idle tales; but he said to himself, "My friends are happy with their religious notions, and it is not worth my while to unsettle them, though it is all a delusion." Thus, though his friends endured much anxiety and anguish of mind on his account, they were not distressed by even suspecting the dreadful depths of wickedness into which he had fallen.

Several years elapsed, and his hardened and impenitent heart still busied itself in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, when Almighty mercy interposed, to snatch him as a brand from the burning. One of his most intimate companions in vice was seized with sudden and alarming illness, and, at the same time, was overwhelmed with horror and anguish of mind in the prospect of that eternity which he had so long despised, but which the gnawing of the worm within convinced him was no fable. D— was the constant attendant of his dying friend. He heard with horror his agonizing shrieks and hollow groans, and trembling asked, "What can I do for you?"

"Read to me! Pray for me! Tell me something to do me good! I *have* got a soul!—there is another world—a world of misery! What, what shall I do!" D— attempted to divert the poor dying wretch, by reading a newspaper and a jest book; but he stopped him with horror and abhorrence, and again cried out for "something to do him good." D— recollected having seen some religious tracts, which had afforded matter for their ungodly mirth; and though he knew, or thought he knew, that all their statements were mere idle fictions, yet if they served to soothe the poor distracted man, he could submit to read them to him. He read, and the poor creature listened with eager attention, only now and then interposing an involuntary groan, which seemed at once to admit the truth of what he heard, and to express an agonizing regret that he had so long neglected and despised matters of such infinite concern. But D— had, as yet, no such feelings; he merely read to pacify his dying companion; and if, as he went on, a momentary thought intruded, "This is really very forcible and important," he dismissed it—"but it is not *true*; it is all *nothing*." While thus engaged, D— received a sudden summons to go immediately to a distant town, on some business of his regiment. The journey occupied several days, perhaps a week, or more. Immediately on his return, he inquired, "How is poor —?" He vainly hoped to find his friend recovered, and ready to resume his old course of iniquity; but instead of this, the reply was, "He

and buried." Horror then struck into the soul of D—. What had become of his unfriend? What would become of him—"There is"—he remembered and approached the expressions of his dying friend—"There is another world: I have a soul that will die: there is a world of endless misery!" These agonizing considerations remained with him night and day, and filled his soul with horrible despair to such a degree, that he was on the very brink of suicide, but was providentially checked in his guilty purpose. As yet he saw nothing of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; and he, indeed, entertained any idea of the possibility of salvation *for him*; but regarded his life as altogether lost and hopeless. Sinful pleasures, however, had entirely lost their relish and esteem. He no longer enjoyed the gay and the loose and foolish jest. How could he attract the attention of a man who felt himself on the brink of endless misery? He avoided the society of his former companions; indeed, he avoided all society, for he knew of none to whom he could communicate the anguish of his heart, or from whom he could hope for sympathy; and he was naturally set down among his companions as having gone melancholy, without cause they could not conjecture. In the midst of his solitary hours, he again looked over the letters of his pious relatives, not with any expectation of deriving comfort from them, but formed to feel himself shut out from all consolation and comfort, but, probably, under a conviction of his guilty neglect in slighting their pious

admonitions. However, they suggested to him the duty, very long awfully neglected, of attending public worship. From that time, as often as he had an opportunity, he secretly entered different places of worship, generally hiding himself behind a pillar, where he thought he could not be seen, and carefully concealing from his companions the place of his resort. What he heard, from time to time, proved instrumental in deepening his convictions, and setting before him more clearly the enormity of his guilt; but as yet no gleam of hope had arisen on his mind, that, peradventure, God would be gracious even to him.

While in this distressed state of mind, D— was providentially removed with his regiment to a town in the West of England. At the same time some fresh arrangement of his duties left his time much more at his own disposal. He accordingly devoted it to the careful perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and frequent attendance at the house of God. His constancy in coming, and the deep interest with which he listened, attracted the notice of an aged and experienced Christian, who more than once kindly shook him by the hand, and invited him to call at his house. The good man's kindness won upon his heart, yet he shrunk from all human intercourse; for bad men, he knew, could not enter into his feelings, and would only attempt to lead him back to his former sinful pursuits; and good men must, he thought, abhor such a monster of vileness and iniquity as he had been. At length, however, his Christian friend would take no de-

nial, but insisted on his accompanying him home. When they were alone, the old disciple said to the young soldier, "My friend, you are accustomed to pray." The poor fellow burst into tears, and said, "No, sir, I cannot pray; I dare not pray; I do not know how to pray." He then related the outline of his history, and expressed his fears that he had sinned beyond the reach of mercy and forgiveness. His friend still urged him to prayer, as opening the only resource for a guilty sinner. "Come," said he, "pray now." The poor fellow still declared that he could not pray. "Then," replied his friend, "I must pray for you." They knelt down together, and the good man, with much feeling and fervency of spirit, implored the mercy of God on this poor broken-hearted penitent; and especially prayed that the Spirit of grace and supplication might be poured out on him, that he might be enabled himself to approach the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace in his time of need. The soldier's heart went along with every petition; he felt that the God of mercy might be sought, even by him; and that he, though the chief of sinners, was not excluded from the salvation which Christ Jesus came into the world to work out.

From this time a new light broke upon the mind of the penitent. In reading the Scriptures and in listening to the preaching of the gospel, he was led to see the all-sufficiency and freeness of the salvation which forms their delightful theme. Prayer became his delight, and the ways of religion in general a source of real

enjoyment. The song of gratitude was upon his lips—"O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation," Isa. xii. 1. And the inquiry was awakened in his heart, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Psa. cxvi. 12; Acts ix. 6. Where such inquiries are presented in sincerity, it is not long before some satisfactory answer is obtained. The converted man was led to see it his duty to join a society of professing Christians, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and, at the same time, to abide with God in his calling; still faithfully serving his king and country, and endeavouring to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things, and embracing every opportunity of doing good to the bodies and souls of his comrades. During a long course of years, D— has been enabled to maintain a consistent and honourable profession of the gospel, and has been blessed with no small share of usefulness in extending its influence to others. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise," Prov. xi. 30.

V.—THE WIDOW AND HER SON.

YE parents, who have labour'd long
To' instruct your tender youth;
But find their evil passions strong
Rebel against the truth;

And after many sighs and tears,
And many an earnest prayer,
While no faint beam of hope appears,
Are yielding to despair ;

Come, listen to my simple tale—
Let not your hopes expire ;
God, when your expectations fail,
May grant your heart's desire.

From hence let children also learn
The sinner's path to shun ;
Deep is his sorrow, if he turn ;
If not—he is undone.

A mother by death's stroke bereft
Of her best earthly friend,
With a large family was left,
Who on her care depend.

It was her first, her highest care,
To guide them in that way,
Where wisdom's pleasures they might share
Which leads to heavenly day.

Bless'd was her toil, because she view'd
Her seven fair daughters, who
Their parent follow'd, and pursued
The path to glory too.

She had a son, in whom she loved
His father's form to trace ;
Oh that her darling child had proved
Adorn'd with early grace !

But when we look for comforts here,
Our joys in sorrow end ;
The Christian hence is taught to fear
On creatures to depend.

Her son was thoughtless, proud, and gay,
Loved with the vain to meet,
He chose the broad, the dangerous way,
And took the scorner's seat.

A course so profligate soon ends
 In shame and poverty ;
 It drove him from his home and friends,
 To cross the boisterous sea.

Who can describe the last adieu,
 The mother's care and pain ?
 For much she fear'd she ne'er should view
 Her only son again.

The Christian volume which records
 A dying Saviour's grace,
 She, ere he goes, with tender words,
 Presents to him, and says—

“ This book, my child, to thee I give,
 My name's inscribed therein
 With your dear name, nor, while you live,
 Forget this parting scene.

“ I charge you by a mother's love
 Never with this to part;
 But read it, love it, for my sake,
 Oh keep it near your heart !

“ You little think what woes betide
 This widow'd anxious breast;
 But if this book your footsteps guide,
 'Twill lull my fears to rest.”

They part.—Past is the fond embrace,
 Now from each other torn ;
 He sails o'er ocean's trackless space—
 She stays behind to mourn.

To various ports the mother goes,
 And asks at every one,
 If any can the fate disclose
 Of her beloved son.

When many a time her efforts fail'd,
 She ask'd of one who knew
 The ship in which her son had sail'd,
 And knew her poor Charles too.

With keen suspense and boding fears,
 She fix'd on him her eye;
 With heart o'erwhelm'd too soon she hears
 The captain's rash reply.

"Madam, the ship has proved a wreck;
 And of the boy you name,
 I know of nought, but what declares
 His folly and his shame.

"So vile, and profligate, and base,
 'Twould be a public good,
 If all like him, a worthless race,
 Were whelm'd in ocean's flood."

No more can converse give relief,
 She seeks for solitude,
 At once to hide her hopeless grief,
 And over it to brood.

"My time," she says, "I now must spend
 In melancholy gloom,
 And mourning for my son, descend
 Into the silent tomb."

Years had elapsed, when at her door,
 An ill-clothed sailor stands,
 Some food and clothing to implore
 From pity's bounteous hands.

To tell what feelings crowd her breast,
 My feeble pen would fail,
 At such a sight, and when addressed
 With such a melting tale:—

"Good madam, I have often seen
 Shipwreck, and want, and woe;
 But ne'er till lately have I been
 So destitute as now.

"A fine young gentleman and me
 God rescued from the waves,
 When all our gay ship's company
 Sunk to their watery graves.

" On a lone island's barren heights
Both he and I were cast,
And after seven long days and nights
I saw him breathe his last.

" Poor fellow ! " streaming tears now wet
His weather-beaten face ;
" The scenes I never shall forget,
I saw in that lone place.

" A book saved from the wreck he read
To me both day and night ;
' This was my mother's gift,' he said,
' Now 'tis my sole delight.'

" He kiss'd the book—for grace he pray'd,
And, fill'd with conscious shame,
Wept for his sins—then mention made
Of his dear mother's name.

" With hearty thanks, to me he gave
The book, with solemn air ;
' Here, Jack, take this, 'tis all I have
To give you for your care.

" ' Read this, it is my last command,
Ne'er from it turn aside ;'
Kindly he clasp'd my trembling hand,
And peacefully he died."

" And is this true? I hope—I fear"—
The' astonish'd mother cries ;
" Yes, very true, the book is here,"
The faithful tar replies.

Batter'd and time-worn, soon he drew
The precious relie forth,
She gazed, she wept, the book she knew,
To her of matchless worth.

Her own name and her son's she read,
Midst anxious feeling's strife ;
And seem'd to hear a voice which said,
" Thy son's restored to life."

"Lord, I can leave this world in peace,
Salvation I have seen;
Thy mercy bids my anguish cease,
And makes my soul serene.

"My honest fellow, will you part,"
She eagerly inquires,
"With this rich treasure, which my heart
So earnestly desires?"

"No, madam," says the gallant tar,
"I'll keep it while I live;
I prize this volume more by far
Than all the world can give.

"'Twas from my dear friend's dying hands,
This pledge of love I took;
I've lost all else in foreign lands,
But never lost this book.

"I feel its worth, it cheers my heart,
Shall be my guide to death,
And never will I with it part,
Till I must yield my breath."

May all who read these simple lines
Be kept in danger's hour,
Safe from the tempter's dark designs,
By an almighty power.

Have any gone in folly's road?
"Return," the Saviour cries;
"To seek your Father and your God,
Poor prodigal arise.

"See how your heavenly Father waits,
The outcasts to receive
Within his mercy's open gates,
All who in me believe."

VI.—HOLD ON, MOTHER!

SUCH was the exhortation of a sailor to his
widowed mother. She had several children for

whom she "prayed day and night exceedingly." Manifestly in answer to her prayers, one after another was awakened by the Spirit of God, convinced of sin, and subdued into saving reconciliation through the medium of Christ crucified. One of her sons followed the seas for eleven years. Much had she prayed for her "poor sailor boy," and many a letter had she written him, rich with maternal counsel and solicitude. When at home, she had taken unwearied pains, such as none but a pious mother would take, to withdraw him from all improper associations, and to interest him in whatsoever things are pure, and true, and lovely.

At length she received letters from him, which breathed a new spirit, and spoke a new language. I listened to the voice of that mother, as with "joy unspeakable," she read to me three of those letters, richly expressive of the views and feelings of a new-born soul. In them all, he acknowledged his special indebtedness to her faithful warnings, and persevering prayers. In one he spoke of the condition and prospects of her children who still remained impenitent; and in order to encourage her to do for them as she had done for him, he says, "Hold on, mother; your prayers may yet be answered in their conversion."

What better counsel can I or any one give to every praying mother in the land? "Hold on, mother." Your children may not be converted to-day or to-morrow, this year or the next; but "be not weary in well-doing;" "hold on" to the Divine promise and the Divine faithfulness, and "be not faithless, but believing."—*Revivalist*.

The evening closed with a little friendly discussion, whether Mr. Sharpe, having already taken the lead on one occasion, should be called upon to do so again, while there were yet two or three of the friends who had not taken their turn. As it was pressed upon him to prepare something suitable for the next meeting at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Burnet, he proposed to select a family sketch from Scripture. The proposal was readily agreed to. Several of these were furnished in succession, offered, as Mr. Sharpe modestly expressed it, by way of a stop-gap, when nothing particular was before the meeting. The implied apology, of course, was confined to his own grouping and colouring, not to the sacred narratives which he took for his study.

EVENING V.



THE FIRST FAMILY.

A Scripture Sketch.

GOD is the great Author and Founder of families. He made man a sociable creature, and provided that he should not be alone. The first man came immediately from the hand of his great Creator, a creature perfectly innocent, capable of every holy exercise and duty, and of every pure and rational enjoyment, and surrounded with every thing that could minister to his innocent wants and gratifications. The Lord God made him, and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," and placed him in Eden, a garden of delights. The early history of the human race can be found *only* in the Bible, the book of God himself. Whenever men have set about to write such a history, (and many such attempts have been made,) they have only involved themselves and their readers in the wildest speculations and the grossest improbabilities; filled the credulous mind with degrading and pernicious absurdities; and left the thinking mind in painful dissatisfaction and uncertainty. Those who have read such conjectures and im-

positions must concur in admitting that their authors knew nothing about the matter. It is, however, natural to desire to know something of the origin of our race. How valuable then the **ONE** authentic document we possess, which informs us, beyond all contradiction, that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" and that "he made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth!" The particulars of the early history of mankind with which we are furnished in Scripture are few, but they are striking and instructive. There are four particulars distinctly noted of man in a state of innocence.

1. He was under the law of his Creator, Gen. ii. 15—17. 2. Man was formed for a life of activity. 3. The duties of piety were enjoined on man in a state of innocence, ver. 3. 4. Marriage was instituted in Paradise, ver. 22—24.

The first pair being joined in marriage by God himself, were surrounded with a far greater portion of outward enjoyment than has fallen to the lot of their most favoured descendants; but, what was incomparably more, they were free from all taint of the selfish, malignant, and irritable passions which so frequently prove the worm at the root of domestic bliss.

But, alas! this happiness was of short duration. Temptation assailed even the inhabitants of Paradise, and overcame them. It is not intended here to detail this sad occurrence, but rather to mark its effects on domestic happiness. One circumstance, however, must not pass unnoticed. Eve was seduced and tempted

by the devil to transgress the commandment of God, and then she became the seducer of her husband. It does not appear that he was deceived, but that he yielded to the importunities of his wife, and thus manifested a preference to the creature above the Creator. Lawful affection may become a snare; and it may, it does become an imperative duty to resist the solicitations of the nearest and dearest friends, when they would tempt us to depart from God.

What a sad change immediately took place, both in the disposition and in the condition of the guilty rebels! When arraigned at the bar of their offended Sovereign, we find them recriminating and casting the blame on each other, or on the circumstances in which He had placed them. Ah, domestic happiness had now lost its perfection!

From this time the married pair became the sharers in each other's toils and sorrows, as well as in affection and enjoyment. Expelled from their native garden, they had now to seek another abode, and to cultivate and weed, with constant care and toil, the earth which had hitherto yielded her produce spontaneously. Many mercies were, however, extended to them even in their fallen state. Bread was given, though it was earned by the sweat of the brow: garments now became necessary, and the hand of Divine mercy furnished them. Direct intercourse with God was cut off by man's transgression; but a new and living way of access was opened by the blood of atonement prefigured in sacrifices. We may conclude that their joint efforts were

employed in procuring the comforts of this life, and in solacing each other under its cares and crosses; and that, as returning penitents, and believers in the mercy of God revealed through a Mediator, they took sweet counsel together, and encouraged each other in the ways of piety. It is thus alone that conjugal happiness can in any case be realized in its full extent.

In process of time this pair became parents; and who but a parent can realize the joys or the anxieties of a parent's heart? To her firstborn, Eve gave the name of Cain, signifying a *possession*, and expressing the fulness of her maternal delight and expectation. Alas! alas! how little did she anticipate what a source of trouble this child would afterwards prove! It is well that the future is hid from parental view, that *all* children may be tenderly cared for, and watched over, and prayed for, and instructed. "In the morning let us sow our seed, and in the evening withhold not our hand, for we know not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both shall be alike good." To her second son, Eve gave a very different name, Abel, which signifies *vanity*. Possibly this was unwittingly an intimation of the early termination of his days; but more probably it expressed the inferior light in which she regarded him compared with his elder brother. How vain, mistaken, and sinful are parental partialities; and how strikingly are they sometimes reprov'd! How often does the favourite child prove the curse of the family, and the neglected child perhaps rises up to be its chief support! Little is

said of the education of these children ; but we may be sure their anxious parents saw with deep regret the early proofs given of their inheriting a corrupt nature, and partaking of that depravity and guilt which they had brought into the world ; and no doubt many fervent prayers ascended on their behalf. We may also infer two things concerning the course of education adopted by the first parents, which deserve the imitation of *all* parents.

1. The children were both trained up to diligence in worldly concerns ; for, though they were apparent heirs to the world, Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel a keeper of sheep. In however high a line of life children may be born, it is incumbent on those who have the care of them to impart to them useful knowledge, by which they may support themselves, if reduced by changing circumstances ; or be enabled to superintend their own concerns with intelligence and respectability, if continued in prosperous and exalted circumstances.

2. They were both instructed in the duties of piety to God ; for, as they grew up, we find both offering sacrifices as the professed servants of the Lord. We cannot indeed command the affections of our children, or ensure the success of our endeavours, it is surely our duty to teach them the good and the right way, and to use our utmost endeavours to persuade them to walk therein ; and though we cannot command or ensure success, we have abundant encouragement to hope and believe that our labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

These children, in all probability, early discovered a striking difference of disposition; and oh, with what grief must the parents have observed in Cain the first indications of a proud, sullen, malignant spirit! On the other hand, with what delight must they have witnessed the meekness, the rectitude, the early piety of Abel! Advancing years farther developed their respective characters. Cain proved himself a child of the wicked one, an unbeliever, a despiser of God, a persecutor of his image in his saints, a monster of iniquity, a murderer of his brother! O children, when your little angry passions rise, when you are inclined to be proud, unforgiving, and disobedient, think how wicked Cain was hurried on to such dreadful lengths, and pray that the sins of your childhood may be pardoned, and your hearts changed by renewing grace, that so your lives may be holy and amiable, and your death happy.

Abel, though a meek, was a zealous servant of God; eminent in faith, stedfastly persevering in the path of holiness, patiently suffering in the cause of religion, and finally closing his life with an honourable martyrdom. The one grand occasion which presents to our view the contrasted characters of these brothers, was an act of worship to God. Cain brought an offering of the fruits of the ground: this might be a very suitable offering for man in a state of innocence to present, as an expression of gratitude, to God as the author of all temporal mercies; but it did not make any confession of guilt, or any application to the Redeemer; and, without these, God

can never be accessible to a guilty creature. Cain did not come in the appointed way, therefore his offering was not an act of obedience to the revealed will of God, or of faith in the offers of His mercy and pardon through a Mediator; and Cain and his offering were rejected. Hence let us learn in what temper and frame of mind to approach the Divine footstool; if we would hope for acceptance, let us come smiting upon our breasts, and saying, "God be merciful unto me a sinner," and pleading that blood of atonement which was shed for the remission of sins.

Such was Abel's offering; his was an act of faith and obedience; he came in the appointed way, acknowledging his guilt, presenting the bleeding victim as an expression of his conviction, that without shedding of blood there is no remission, and exercising faith on the promised "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." To Abel and his offering God had respect, and testified his acceptance and approbation in some way intelligible to both the brothers; probably a flame from heaven descended and consumed the sacrifice. Abel's heart was filled with the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and Cain's with the basest malignity and most murderous rancour. Instead of confessing his past sins and errors, and seeking mercy and pardon where his brother had found them, he hated his brother, because his own works were evil and his brother's were righteous, 1 John iii. 12; and giving way to his ungoverned passions, he rose up and slew his brother. Alas! how rapid and

how awful is the progress of sin! and oh, how bitter must have been the remorse, how heart-rending the anguish of our first parents, when they saw death through their transgression then entering the world, and entering it in its most horrible form; even by the firstborn of man embruining his hands in the blood of his brother! Thus were they, in a manner, deprived of both their sons in one day; for though the murderer was suffered to live, he henceforth became a vagabond in the earth, forsaking the abode of his family, and renouncing even the externals of religion, and bearing upon him a visible mark of the Divine displeasure. Doubtless the sin of the murderer was more distressing to the parents than the death of the martyr, whose spirit they could by faith trace into the presence of God, and whom they might hope ere long to meet again.

After this it pleased God to renew the hopes of the first parents by the birth of another son, called Seth, who was a righteous man, in whose family the knowledge and worship of God prevailed, and who was indeed the progenitor of the promised Seed. Adam and Eve lived many years, centuries indeed, and saw a numerous race descended from them, who plainly discovered themselves to be the degenerate plants of a corrupt stock.

Some conversation on the failure of parental efforts, in consequence of the admission of practical parental errors, led to the communication

by some of the elder parents of the following sketches, bearing upon the subject.

FAMILY SKETCHES.

I.—“HE WILL KNOW BETTER BY AND BY.”

TRUTH is sometimes made to do the work of falsehood; perhaps never more so than when, in the form of a popular saying, something is asserted which no one would think of contradicting; but, from the manner of saying which, it is too evident that something the very opposite of truth is intended to be inferred. “He (or she) will know better by and by,” is a saying that comes under this character. Nothing can be more true than that every rational being is, every hour of his life, adding to his stock of knowledge. Every thing that passes under his observation, or is imprinted on his sensations, must add to his knowledge. He who has seen an elephant, or witnessed a shipwreck, must know more about them than he who has not seen them; and he who has had the toothache, or a broken limb, must know more of the pain they occasion than those who have never experienced it. But then there are two things not quite so certain, which this saying is often intended to convey. “He will know better by and by;”—but does that form any excuse for not attempting to *teach him now*? “He will know better by and by;”—but does it necessarily follow that he will be *wiser*?

When first an infant begins to choose for himself, (which, by the way, is at a much earlier period than is generally imagined,) when he eagerly strives to reach the object of his desire, and resists the hand that would restrain him, this notable saying often comes in as an apology for yielding to his infant violence: "Well, let him have it this time. It is of no use to contradict such a child as this. He knows no better. *He will know better by and by.*" Yes, he certainly will know more, for every such exercise will increase his skill in the art of conquering, by violence or by cunning, those whose weakness he is so early given to understand; but if it be imagined that he will know better than to desire what is improper for him, or that he will be more willing to submit to the guidance of those who ought to know better than himself, nothing can be more opposite to truth. He will know better how to conquer, but he will not know better that it is his duty to submit, for two very simple reasons: first, he has never been taught; and, secondly, he has a natural and growing disinclination to learn.

"You should not spend so much money on cakes and fruit. I have no more halfpence to give you; besides, you only make yourself sick with them. Well, come, take it this time; but do not come to me for any more. That boy is always teasing me for money, when I really cannot afford to give it him. He should not do so. Well, he is but young; *he will know better by and by.*" Can it be any wonder that if the boy be thus permitted to squander pence, the

youth is found squandering pounds on chains, and seals, and pictures, and perfumes, and extravagances of every description? Can it be any wonder, if, when his parents' resources are cramped and exhausted, he should resort to dishonest means of gratifying his uncurbed propensities?

"That girl of mine," says one silly mother, "is a giddy-headed thing. She is always after pleasure of one kind or other, and often goes with children that do her no good; but she is so self-willed, there is no such thing as hindering her, if she sets her mind upon any thing. Well, she means no harm; she *will know better by and by*." It is matter of regret, but to a thinking person it can be no matter of astonishment, that this giddy self-willed child grows up with a full determination to have her own will and way in every respect; to associate with whom she pleases; to follow every vanity on which she sets her mind; and, in spite of all parental and friendly remonstrances, to cast in her lot for life with a man of vicious character. "Still," says the mother, "*she will know better by and by*;" but not, it is to be feared, until knowledge comes too late to retrieve the mistakes of folly; not until her mind is corrupted, her character injured, her prospects blighted, by an association which she ought to have known better than to form; but which, once formed, her own painful experience can only avail to teach her bitter regret that she was not wise in time.

Many parents, pious but weak, regret that their children discover such a total disinclina-

tion to religious exercises. When the parents are preparing to attend religious services, the young people are setting out on some party of pleasure; and when summoned to meet around the family altar, they are not come home; the sabbath seems a burden to them, and the Bible lies unopened for days and weeks together. It is very lamentable; but what can they do? They cannot give their children grace, and it is of no use to constrain them to religious observances against their will. They still hope that *they will know better by and by*. Such are the complaints not unfrequently uttered, and such the vague hopes not unfrequently indulged.

Now, with the deepest and most humbling conviction of the depravity of human nature, and with the fullest persuasion that nothing short of Divine energy can renew the soul, and turn it from the love of sin to the love of holiness; and, at the same time, fully admitting that compulsion to outward observances, in the case of youth having attained to years of maturity, can produce little real advantage, and may tend to increase prejudice and hostility; still we must say, that parents who thus reason seem to have overlooked the instituted connexion between means and end, and to have been deficient in the performance of their earliest duties toward their offspring. Instead of indulging the indolent, presumptive consolation of hoping that they will know better by and by, does not conscience admit that they ought to have been taught better long ago? Might not much have been done by the steady exercise of parental authority at a time

when it might be absolute without being irrational? Ought not the babe in its earliest months to have acquired the habit of submitting to the will of its parents? And might not this habit have been so effectually and deeply rooted by discipline, in which firmness and mildness were judiciously mingled, that, to the very first dawn of reason, an act of perverseness and rebellion should appear a monstrous and alarming thing? In like manner, might not the little reasoner be effectually convinced, that a point was never to be gained by teasing; that an indulgence was never withheld nor granted without reason; that there was a settled standard and habit of expenditure, which none of the family thought of violating? Again, I would ask, might not the duties of the sabbath and of public worship, the reading of the Scriptures, and prayer, be so uniformly observed, and, at the same time, so connected with pleasurable associations, that even habit would render deviation from them painful and improbable. We all know the force of habit in the most trifling things. That to which we have been regularly accustomed from infancy, though in itself very unimportant, if interrupted, becomes a serious and distressing privation; and, while far from assigning to mere habit more importance than it deserves, it is certainly doing something for young people, so thoroughly to habituate them to the right course in any particular, that it would be doing violence to their feelings to propose or think of any deviation from it. As a proof of this, in some families what coaxing, and threatening, and "white lies," (as they are called,) are daily practised, and considered

absolutely necessary for the purpose of getting children to bed or to school! while in other families the signal is instantly and quietly obeyed. Why? Because in the latter families parental authority is so firmly and quietly established, that the children never think of resisting it. In such families the slightest expression of a parent's disapprobation is a far greater and more effectual punishment than all the scolding, and rods, and fools' caps, and dark closets, to which the former are continually resorting. One great means of habituating children with regularity and pleasure to join their parents in religious exercises, is by making it evident to them that religion is a source of real pleasure and enjoyment. If the parents are religious, they ought to be cheerful. The hour of devotion, the perusal of the Scriptures, should be hailed as a delightful refreshment, and not reluctantly attended to as a gloomy burden, or a troublesome interruption from more congenial pursuits. If children are accustomed to see that their parents are happy, and that religion makes them so, they will, in all probability, grow up with a settled conviction that religion is the source of happiness, and that if they possess it not, the fault is in themselves. This will very probably keep them constant in attending the means of grace; and, even though the faith, and prayers, and patience of their parents may be long exercised, many delightful instances warrant the hope, that the summit of their parental desires will ultimately be attained, in the decided conversion and solid piety of their beloved children.

II.—“WHO SHALL BE UPPERMOST?”

It is an excellent maxim adopted in many schools, “A place for every thing, and every thing in its place;” and where this maxim is duly observed and acted upon, order and quietness will be the happy result. The same rule applies equally well to persons as to things. In the wise and orderly arrangements of Divine Providence, every individual has the proper portion assigned him, of duty, influence, and enjoyment; and if each quietly filled his own sphere, without intruding on that of others, all confusion and disorder would be avoided, and universal harmony and happiness would prevail. But in this arrangement some must necessarily fill subordinate stations. It is the part of some to govern, and of others to obey; and it is equally the duty of the superior to maintain the ascendancy with which Providence has invested him, with firmness and moderation; and of the inferior, to be contented and conformable in his allotted sphere of subjection. Sometimes the happiness of a community is sacrificed to the oppression and tyranny of those who preside; and sometimes to the insubordination and perverseness of those who are governed; but more frequently than either, to the want of steady principled adherence in each to his respective station, and its duties. This is especially the case in those small communities called families, generally consisting of parents, children, and servants. Where the ranks are so few, and the respective spheres of each so correctly and ex-

plicitly defined, it should scarcely, one would suppose, be made a question, *Who shall be uppermost?* and yet, perhaps, there are but few families, comparatively speaking, in which this is not the source of contention, and the bane of happiness, from day to day, and from year to year. It may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to sketch from life a few examples of this most ungraceful species of contention, in the progress of which it is probable some hints may suggest themselves as to the means of avoiding it.

In the family of A., the mischief appears to have originated in a want of good understanding between the heads of the family. It is no uncommon thing for the children and servants to hear such great swelling words as these: "I insist upon it—it shall be done—I WILL have my own way—I am determined to be master in my own house." And if the verbal reply be not quite as noisy and decisive, the conduct of the other party manifests as entire a determination that "it shall not." Such being the state of things at the head of affairs, it will readily be concluded, that the example of insubordination has its full influence on the dependents of the family. The children are a race of rebels; disobedience against one parent is encouraged, or at least connived at by the other, and the often-uttered angry remonstrance, "I say, Mr. —, will you make these children mind me? it is a shame you do not take my part: they mind me no more than a post;" only serves to manifest the complete disunion of the governors, and to increase the contempt of the governed for the authority of

both. It need scarcely be added, that they must be very uncommon servants indeed, who, under such management, do not learn and practise disobedience, insolence, and artfulness; and no doubt they will very soon be seeking a better situation.

On the very delicate subject of maintaining the balance of power in matrimonial life, it may be observed, that while the respective physical and mental constitution of each, as well as the express directions of the word of God, sufficiently mark the design of Providence that, in the great outline of affairs, man should govern, and woman subserve, a sphere of supremacy is assigned to each, which cannot be invaded without general injury. In *all* concerns woman should have great influence; in some the sole management. No man of delicacy will be fond of displaying his authority, nor will any woman of sense dispute it; but each will be subject to the other in love. In a well-regulated family, all the minute details of domestic affairs will be safely committed to a prudent wife; nor will the husband ever interpose his authority, except it be to uphold hers. "Take care of the pence," said the shrewd philosopher, Franklin, "and the pounds will take care of themselves." "Maintain your wife's authority," said B., "and your own will be securely established." "Father, may I have that apple?" "Father, may I take a walk?" asked the child, intent on gaining his object. "How can you think of asking *me*," returned the judicious father, "when your dear mother has already given you

an answer?" The reply sunk into the minds of the children; it became a settled principle with them, that the decision or the act of one parent, was that of both, and that no appeal remained from one to the other. The early death of this excellent father proved the melancholy occasion of exemplifying the vast importance of the principle to which he had so steadily adhered. The arduous task of the mother was greatly facilitated, and the best interests of the children greatly promoted, by thus having been early, very early taught to reverence, not to despise, the authority of a mother. In too many instances a different line of conduct in the father, has, in similar circumstances, been productive of distressingly different results; the mother's strength has been wasted, and her heart broken, in fruitless efforts to reduce to discipline a set of rebels, who, for want of that discipline, rushed on to their own ruin.

C. was frequently absent from home—too frequently to maintain habitual influence in his family, where he appeared rather as an occasional visitor, capriciously dispensing indulgences, or tyrannically dealing out censures and punishments, than as the constant head of authority and source of supply; the instructor, the guardian, the intercessor, the example of the family. He was a man of a strong and original mind; but, in the important affair of marriage, he had sacrificed judgment to fancy, and had married a weak, silly beauty. It was for want of society in his wife, that he was so frequently driven or allured out to seek it elsewhere. In

such a family, it is not surprising that the question was often loudly discussed—*Who shall be uppermost?* and that as the children could outbawl the mother, the precedency generally remained with them. Will it be thought that the following sketch is exaggerated? The reader may rely on the testimony of an eye and ear witness to its strict fidelity.

A person calling on business, finding that Mr. C. was from home, was introduced to the room where Mrs. C. was undressing her baby, and the servant in vain persuading a young rebel, between two and three years old, to go to bed. "Come, Edward, come; there's a good boy;" and she attempted to lay hold of him; but Edward stamped, and screamed, and fought, and the mother could scarcely be heard when she attempted to interpose. "Edward, go along this moment, do, you naughty boy." Betty desisted a moment, and Edward returned to his play, as if he had never been called to leave it. "Come, then, now I know he will go like a good boy; and" (whispering) "Betty will give him a bit of sugar;" but the bribe would not do, and the screaming and kicking were resumed. It was utterly in vain for the stranger to open her commission; she seated herself quietly to wait the passing by of the storm. "I am quite ashamed, madam," said the weak and silly mother, "you should see such a naughty boy; but he is jealous of his little brother, and so we are obliged to humour him; but I do not see it does any good. Edward, do not let Mrs. D. see you such a naughty boy: her little boys

are never naughty. Now see how good he will go!" Again and again the attempt was made in vain. "Then call Richard," said the mother. Richard, the apprentice boy, made his appearance, and cried out, "Hey! hey! what is the matter here?—come down, you old man, out of the chimney, and take away naughty Edward, that will not go to bed." As Richard fiercely seized the child, he screamed and sobbed with terror; and, for a moment, the visitor was really alarmed, lest he should throw himself into fits; but the apprehension was soon allayed, or rather transferred, from a physical to a moral evil, when the new ally of mother and nurse turned round, and began soothing the child; "Well, then, tell his own Richard all about it; what, did naughty Betty vex him? There, go along, old man; go up the chimney again; we do not want you now." "And naughty Betty shall go too," said the spoiled boy. "So she shall, then; and his own Richard will take him to bed." "But I will not go to bed;" and he burst from Richard's arms, and began dressing himself up in the baby's clothes, which the mother had just taken off. After some humouring, and some struggling and tearing, the clothes were taken away from him one by one, except a costly lace cap, which he would by no means relinquish. The mother screamed, "Oh, get that beautiful cap from him, whatever you do;" and Edward, finding that a high price was set upon the article, immediately exalted it into a subject of contention; struggling and persuasion were alike vain, and at last he made it the

condition of his going to bed, that he should sleep in the baby's lace cap; a fresh altercation and scuffle ensued, and the father's voice was heard. "Well, then, he *must* have it," said the silly mother, "or he will make such a dreadful screaming, and his father will be sure to whip him; make haste, and get him to bed out of the way." The promise of the sugar was now remembered, and made a condition; the demand was resisted, and then conceded; and when the closet was opened to reach it, the humoured child espied a painted sugared image from a twelfth cake, and insisted on having that too. "But he must not have that," said his mother, "for Dr. — says they are really poisonous." Opposition only strengthened the resolution of the self-willed creature; he commenced his screaming and kicking again, but in so moderated a tone, as showed his drift was to terrify his mother into submission, without making noise enough to call up his father. All parties were weary of the contention; and, as was usually the case, Master Edward completely gained his point, and went off to bed with the misapplied epithet of a *good boy*.

In the family of E. the contention of *who shall be uppermost?* has originated and been kept up for want of due authority being early established and constantly maintained. When the young mother was dressing her first infant, it screamed, and she weakly desisted from her employment, and pacified it with the breast. "You are spoiling your child," said her more experienced friend. The mother smiled, and

replied, "Such a babe as this cannot know." "O yes," said her friend, "he does know, as you will soon find by experience. If you do not gratify him to-morrow, he will scream more loudly than he has done to-day; and, in a very few days, it will become settled, that he *will not* be dressed without the indulgence. On the other hand, if you exercise a little firmness and self-denial, and go steadily on, your child will soon be aware that resistance is in vain; he will become patient, and even pleased, and the operation which you now so much dread, will be numbered among your daily enjoyments." "Well, I will try," was the resolve; but next day the screaming commenced, and the father was by; and he could not bear to hear the child cry—and the mother trembled—and *once more* indulged it. The result was as her friend predicted; and, in course of time, the parents were blessed with a daily concert of three or four screaming children, during the necessary operation of washing and dressing. As these children became old enough to choose and desire certain objects, it was no uncommon thing for the parents first to refuse their improper requests, then to yield to their clamours, and finally to punish them for the consequences. Baby stretched out his hand for the china image, and was told he must not touch it; but he cried, and the desire was granted: he let it fall, and was slapped for the mischief; the mother then justly accused herself of being hasty and unjust to her darling, and soothed him with her caresses. Not unfrequently a point was conceded,

or a fault overlooked, with the foolish excuse, "It must be so this once; he is but a child; he will know better as he grows older." But the reverse has proved to be the fact; every day the task of management became more and more difficult; and a most amiable couple, with the kindest dispositions, find that they have sacrificed the daily peace of their family, and the future welfare of their children, to false tenderness and want of decision. As the young people rise up in life, they make nothing of quitting a parent's roof, or the service of a master, if the least thing crosses their inclinations; and, instead of seeking to return in humble penitence, must be humoured back by intreaties and concessions.

Nothing tends more to weaken authority, than threats of punishment not inflicted. Blustering threats are the shores generally used to prop up a tottering authority; but, in fact, they tend only to throw down the building altogether. That parent has little, and is likely to have still less, real authority, who is often heard to exclaim, "Leave off this moment, or I will come and flog you; you shall be whipped as sure as you are alive." The child soon perceives that this is only noisy breath, and has no real connexion with the punishment threatened; he goes on as if he had not heard the prohibition: or if the parent should approach to fulfil his word, the child only runs off, with little fear of being pursued, but with ideas sufficiently contemptible of the parent's firmness and veracity. A child had been managed by reason, firmness, and

gentleness, happened to overhear a neighbour rashly threatening her child with a punishment she obviously never intended to execute; he, however, had no idea but that she was serious and in earnest; he ran to his mother in tears, and greatly agitated, and said, "O mother, Samuel — is to have his brains knocked out." "I hope not," replied the mother; "I hope no such dreadful thing will happen to him." "But, mother, there will; for I heard his mother say she would do it her ownself." Next day, however, he saw his playfellow as well as usual, and expressed great surprise. His mother replied, "I told you his mother could not mean to do such a wicked thing." "Well then, mother, neighbour — must have told a falsehood—that is all." A few days after, this person happened to call on the parents of the little boy whose astonishment had been so much excited at her conduct; several children were playing about rather noisily; but, on her entrance, one of the parents said, "Now, children, we shall want you to be quiet." This command was instantly obeyed, to the utter astonishment of the visitor, who said she would give any thing for the secret of managing children so easily. "The secret," replied the father, "is simply this: when we speak, our children know we mean to be obeyed, not trifled with; but we never threaten to knock out their brains, nor have we ever found such threats necessary."

It may be said, that these are extreme cases; and it must be admitted, that the question is

often practically started, where no such gross folly is practised by the parents, nor such gross disobedience manifested on the part of the children. Perhaps some affectionate and amiable, and even pious young people, on reflection, may find themselves guilty through inconsideration, who would shudder at the idea of deliberately discussing with their parents the indelicate question, *Who shall be uppermost?* The heads of a family are sometimes exposed to inconvenience, by want of punctuality in the younger branches: a moment's reflection will convince a youth, who regards the authority of God, that in all domestic arrangements it is the part of parents to dictate, and of children to conform; and that the wishes and comforts of the parents ought not to be sacrificed to the morning indolence, or the mid-day procrastination, or the evening visits, of children and their friends. A word to the wise is sufficient.

In some families, it is said, that the discussion not unfrequently occurs between mistress and servants. Few servants, perhaps, have the honest impudence to give a mistress the reply once received by a friend of the writer; "Well, ma'am, you may say what you have a mind, and then I will do what I have a mind:" but the practical determination is too often expressed; and too often it seems to be admitted as a kind of unpleasant necessity, by those whose business it is to put a stop to it. "My servant *will* have her own way; I *cannot* get her to mind what I say;" are complaints full as dis-

graceful to the mistress as the servant. If the servant does not know her place, she must be taught it by the mistress; and if she will not learn, she should certainly be sent to seek another teacher. But before a mistress indulges in complaints of one whom she retains in her service, it behoves her to consider whether the evil may not, in one way or other, have originated with herself: in want of firmness—issuing orders, and not making a point of seeing them fulfilled; in indistinctness—the orders given not being clearly defined and unhesitatingly expressed; in caprice—when that which is enjoined as right at one time, is censured as wrong at another, without any real difference of circumstance; or in general irregularity—which, when it prevails in a house, renders it next to impossible for even a good servant to know her duty, and furnishes a bad one with a fine excuse for neglecting or violating it. It must be added, with regret, that the balance of authority over children and servants is too often forfeited by inconsistency of conduct. The parent and the master derives his authority from God; and if the higher claims to which he professes and owes allegiance and subjection be disregarded and violated, in vain will he look for respect and reverence towards his own; the best systems and the most judicious instructions are thus rendered inefficient, and the dependents of such a head too often take leave, from his bad example, to break through his good injunctions. The only way to lay at rest the unprofitable question,

Who shall be uppermost? is for the heads of a family to understand their post and its responsibilities, and steadily, firmly, and kindly, to discharge its duties, and to claim the subordination of those over whom it places them in authority: not hastily and imperiously to make demands, which reflection may convince them were unwise and unjust; but when demands are made, never to dispense with their observance. In all their enactments, let it be manifest that they have in view, not so much their own gratification as the general good; and that all they do, and all they require, is with a conscientious regard to the supreme authority of God. By such a line of government, the duties of subordination will be rendered comparatively easy and pleasant; and, as far as order and happiness can be attained in this imperfect state, the order and happiness of the family will be secured.

At the close of this meeting, Mr. Burnet, at whose house it was held, was reminded that it devolved on him to furnish matter for the next evening. He feared that he had nothing at command likely to be acceptable; but Mrs. Burnet called to his recollection that he had by him the family history of an intelligent and pious old man, related by himself, with which she thought their friends might be interested.

EVENING VI.



ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. BURNET produced the "Old Man's Recollections," written in a stiff old-fashioned hand, with some few orthographical errors, and divided into three chapters. The narrative, and the conversation arising out of it, occupied the whole evening. The party, on this occasion, had come round to their first place of meeting, the house of Mr. Elliott, junior, where the little society had originated. All the friends congratulated themselves on the useful turn thus given to their social visits; each was ready to acknowledge some practical instruction received, and all concurred in rejoicing that, at least, the frivolity and mischief-making, by which tea parties are too often characterized, had found no admission to their little circle. A gentle hint was given to Mr. Elliott, that his services, as secretary, could not be regarded as forming a dispensation from other contributions; and it was hoped that, at the next meeting, he would

come prepared to gratify the company with some suitable communication.

AN OLD MAN'S RECOLLECTIONS.

CHAP. I.—NEW YEAR'S DAY; OR, THE FAMILY VISIT.

BEING a plain man, and not much skilled in the use of the pen, perhaps I am presuming too far in attempting to write these lines, concerning the last new year's day that I had the happiness of spending with all my brothers and sisters, in the house of our dear aged parents, now happy in a better world. It was a very solemn and interesting, as well as pleasant, day to me; and all the circumstances of it are just as fresh to my mind as if they had happened but yesterday. I often picture to myself the room in which we were assembled, and where every one sat, and how they looked; and I cannot help fancying that if, from this picture, one article of furniture were removed, or one added to it, I should perceive the alteration in a minute. However, what is of far greater consequence, I hope that my mind has retained impressions of some good things which were said on that day, and which have many times since proved to me as a shield against temptation, and as an anchor in the day of trouble; and, therefore, I make bold to set down a few of those good words of Scripture, for such they mostly were, hoping that the reader may find them instructive, and profitable too. It is my intention, also, to give some account of

my good parents, which we heard from their own lips that same day I am speaking of; and also of what has fallen out in the family since their death.

Our family at that time consisted of three brothers and four sisters, and, as is generally the case with large families, we were scattered about, and placed in different circumstances; but it was my father's particular desire that all of us should meet together and spend that day at home; for so we continued to call the old house, though some of us had been married, and left it years before.

My eldest sister, Martha, although near upon turning the hill-top of life, had never, as I believe, entertained a thought of changing her condition; and perhaps it was better so than otherwise, for she was a truly useful person in that state of life in which she was placed; but withal so mighty particular in her little ways and habits, that I question whether she could have made herself as happy in the bustling, and often changing scenes of a family life. She resided with my parents, contributing much to their comfort, yet honourably supporting herself, by keeping a little school; and many a good, notable, thrifty mother of a family can look back to her instruction with gratitude, and to her memory with respect. Lydia was the next: she had been married nine or ten years, to a chandler shopkeeper in the town. They were both of them industrious, striving, and saving; and, as they had only one child, they were thriving apace, and getting up in the world. I was the third of the family.

My father had bred me up to the trade of cooper. I married soon after I was out of my time; and as my wife's father had a trifle to give her, and I had saved a little also, we got together a small stock, and set up in the trade. I can truly say, that I strove hard in the workshop, and my wife in the house, to make both ends meet; and yet we had many, many sharp struggles so to do. My poor dear wife was but sickly, and a young family came on apace. I remember, on that new year's day I am speaking of, we had four little creatures under seven years old, and another a coming. Perhaps I had been wiser to have gone on a year or two longer as a journeyman, which I know was my dear parents' mind, as I was in constant work, and had good pay: but young people mostly think they know best, though they often, as I have done, live to find out that their parents had not lived longer, and seen and thought more, without gaining some wisdom from experience. Wise are they who will learn wisdom from the experience of those who have gone before them; but it is not a common case; the most, choose to go to school for themselves, though, as the saying is, "Experience keeps a dear school, and strikes many a hard blow."— But where am I wandering to? I was telling about the party at my father's. Next came my brother George. Poor fellow! it cut me to the heart to see him. The new year's day before he was as fine and comely a young man as ever eyes beheld; but he had become wan, feeble, and emaciated; and father and mother cast many an anxious look towards him; and Rose, a bloom-

ing lively girl, to whom he was soon to have been married, sat beside him, watching his pale countenance and feeble wasted hands, till her poor heart seemed ready to break with grief and disappointment. Poor George! he was a good, steady, thoughtful lad, always intent upon learning and doing what was good, and beloved by all that had to do with him. I believe, if father and mother had a child they depended upon more than another, for the comfort of their age, George was he. And his master, the miller, so respected him, that he willingly gave consent to a match with his only daughter, Rose; and, in all likelihood, theirs would have been the mill. But so true is the saying, "Man proposes, and God disposes; man appoints, and God disappoints." An accident which George met with had brought on his illness, and blasted all his prospects for life.

My sister Rachel had been married within the last year, to a young farmer a few miles off; and they now brought their young one to pay its first visit to its grandparents. Rachel, I must own, was my favourite sister, (if I had a favourite, for I heartily loved them all;) she was a gentle, tender-hearted, sweet-tempered thing. Her husband was doatingly fond of her; and both of them were so proud of the baby, and afraid to trust it a moment out of their sight. I believe they thought there was never such another born into the world.

Next to Rachel, was Catherine, a fine well-grown girl of seventeen. She used to wait upon the young ladies at the parsonage; but she got

leave to spend that day at home: and so did Henry, the youngest, who was lately apprenticed to an ironmonger; a stout, active, resolute lad he was. I have heard father and mother observe to each other, "That boy must be held in with a firm hand; but it must be a soft one too." And I know now, as my own children grow up, what my parents meant in their remarks on the different treatment required by different children.

We were all most affectionately welcomed by the good old people, sister Martha, and brother George; and when dinner was over, and each of the young ones had been seated on grandfather's knee, and ages, and growth, and likenesses had been duly compared, aunt Martha took them all into the school room, where a good fire was prepared, and two of her eldest scholars engaged, to take care of, and amuse them. During their absence, the conversation mostly ran upon our worldly circumstances: how business prospered, and how our families were provided for. The young women took the opportunity of consulting my good mother upon any little difficulties in their domestic management, especially respecting the care of their children; on this subject aunt Martha would often interpose a hint respecting the management of their tempers; she considering it a matter of great importance to bring them early into subjection and discipline. Her hints I observed were differently received by the young mothers. In sister Lydia's countenance, I fancied a slight expression of contempt, at the idea of receiving instruction, on a subject of which

she prided herself on being already mistress. She had but one girl; of course it was a pet, and she often said she was determined to give it the best of education. Rachel looked at her baby with tender fondness, as if she thought it scarcely possible that such a sweet innocent lamb should ever stand in need of the exercise of authority. While my good woman cordially agreed with all my mother's and sister Martha's observations, and expressed her wish more than ever steadily to attend to them. Parents who have only one child, may humour it, and let it have its own way, and go on for some time, without finding out the mischief of such indulgence; but when they come to have four or five, they will soon perceive the difference. During this conversation, poor George was resting on a couch; and Rose sat pensively by him, sighing to think that these observations were not likely to prove interesting to her; yet she entered so kindly into the concerns of others, and bore such an air of resignation, mingled with her grief, that had the object of her affections been a stranger to our family, we could not but have felt the most deep and tender sympathy for her.

For the sake of the children, and those of us whose homes were distant, the tea was hastened; after which, the children were again brought in and quietly seated, the young ones in their mothers' arms, while my venerable father distributed amongst us his new year's gifts. As they were all of them excellent books, any or all of which would form a choice addition to a plain man's library, I shall take the liberty of setting down

their titles. My sister Martha's was "Dr. Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion." Sister Lydia's, some fine "Discourses on Eternity, by Mr. Job Orton." Mine was "Boston's Crook in the Lot," a choice book indeed. George's was "Fawcett's Sick Man's Companion." Rachel's, "Baxter's Christian Directory." Catherine's, "Doddrige's Sermons to Young Persons." And Henry's, "Baxter's Call to the Unconverted." Then there were six Bibles, in which my father wrote the names and dates of birth of his six grandchildren; presenting one to each that was capable of receiving it, and charging the parents to take care of the others for the younger ones.

The large family Bible was then placed on the table, for my father to read a chapter, and pray with us before we parted. Having opened it, with great solemnity, he said, "My dear children, this is the book of God; may every one of you duly prize it as such. Make it the man of your daily counsel: it will, under the blessing of Him who indited it, guide you right in all your perplexities, and support you under your trials. I hope it is your daily practice to read it; but if any of you have hitherto neglected this important duty, and slighted this precious privilege, may God give you grace from this good day to begin a new course. Oh, if you did but know its real value and suitability to all your circumstances, no exhortation of mine could be necessary to ensure your constant regard to it. See, my children, it contains words suited to every one of you. My solitary Mar-

tha, hast thou not said, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord,' *Psa. cxix. 57.* 'My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me,' *Psa. lxxiii. 8.* 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory,' *Psa. lxxiii. 24.* My prosperous children, does it not admonish you, that 'the time is short;' that it behoves you to 'use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away?' Does it not charge you to 'take heed, and beware of covetousness;' to 'take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this life, and so that day' of the Lord 'come upon you unawares?' Does it not exhort you to 'trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy?' and warn you that 'they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition?' *1 Cor. vii. 29, 31; Luke xii. 15; xxi. 34; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 17.* My struggling children, does it not encourage you to cast all your care upon God, who careth for you? to look upon the lilies, and the ravens, and the sparrows, and learn to trust your Father who provides for them, and who will not be unmindful of the wants of his children? Is it not promised that bread shall be given, and your water shall be sure? 'Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,' *1 Pet. v. 7; Luke xii. 6, 7, 22—30; Isa. xxxiii. 16; Psa. xxxvii. 3.*

"My afflicted children, have you not learned, in the retirement of sickness and sorrow, that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth?' Do you not 'know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;' and that 'your light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?' Heb. xii. 6; Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17.

"Those of you who are happy in the connexions of life, remember you are called to 'keep yourselves from idols,' and 'set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.' The only way to have our earthly connexions and endearments sanctified, is by having Christ Jesus above all precious to our souls, and by possessing a fitness for that world, where there is no more marrying, nor giving in marriage, 1 John v. 21; Col. iii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 7; Matt. xxii. 30.

"You that are parents, remember what a solemn charge this sacred book addresses to you, Take this child, and nurse it for God; 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;' 'train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it;' 'but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' However lovely your children, be sure that foolishness is bound up in their hearts; and cruel is that kindness which would spare the rod, and spoil the child. Remember, if you would do any good in this

work, you must chasten them betimes. Ah, children! I trust the Bible and the throne of grace were truly dear to me from my youth up; but when I became a parent, I was driven to them oftener than ever; and so will you, if you know their value." I mark the texts to which my father here referred: Exod. ii. 9; Eph. vi. 4; Prov. xxii. 6; xxix. 15; xxii. 15; xiii. 24.

He then turned to his blooming Kate, and said, "Read this book, my child; it will teach thee that 'favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.' It will teach you not to covet the outward adorning of gold, or pearls, or gay apparel, but 'the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' It will point out to you the gracefulness of 'modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety,' and the most becoming ornament of 'women professing godliness, good works,' Prov. xxxi. 31; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4; 1 Tim. ii. 9. Henry, my boy, let this book deeply impress on your mind what you have often heard from the lips of your parents, that 'a wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother,' Prov. x. 1. Kate and Henry, I unite you in this exhortation, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,' Eccl. xii. 1. Oh, what a sad, sad pity, that any to whom it is addressed, should suffer it to go by unanswered, till it becomes out of season for them!"

Then turning to my mother, he thus addressed her:—"My dear faithful partner, we have travelled together many a painful, and many a pleasant step in the journey of life; and we have always found in this blessed book a delightful companion and a faithful God. He who has been the Guide of our youth will not forsake our grey hairs; we will venture down the hill of life, leaning on his faithful arm; for even to hoary hairs he will carry us, and we will show his strength unto this generation, and his power to every one that is to come, Psa. lxxi. 17, 18; Isa. xlv. 4.

"Now, you little ones, come here, and let me say a word to you." The four who were able to understand his summons quickly crowded round his knees. "My little dears, mind, this book is the book of God; it is sent on purpose to teach you the way to be good and happy. It is a great mercy to have this book, and to be able to read it. Be sure you beg your parents to teach you. Remember that this book has made your old grey-headed grandfather and grandmother happy for more than sixty years; and when you hear that they are dead, they will be gone to a better world, of which this book tells them. You must study it with all your heart, and pray to God to bless you, and then it will do as much for you. Now I must read you a few sweet words, which seem to have been written on purpose for such little ones as you; may God write them upon your hearts! 'Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.' 'My son, give me thine heart.'

'I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.' 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.' 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God," Col. iii. 20; Prov. xxiii. 26; viii. 17; Matt. xxi. 16; Mark x. 14.

"Now, my sons and daughters, one and all, I charge you, 'know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: if you seek him, he will be found of thee; but if you forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever,' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. To God I commend you, and may we all meet in that happy world, where days and years revolve no more!"

CHAP. II.—THE OLD MAN'S PARENTS.

I NOW proceed with some particulars of the early life of my good parents; wishing that they may prove interesting to the reader. I have often thought of them as tending to confirm the truth, that real religion adorns every station in life; teaches how to rise in life, and how to descend, (or, as St. Paul says, "how to be abased, and how to abound," Phil. iv. 12,) and turns all circumstances to a good account. There was great talk formerly, of something called the philosopher's stone, which if once it could be discovered, was to turn every thing to gold. I never heard of one who found it, but I have heard of many who spent their lives and property in trying to find it. But though that, as I have always understood, proved to be a mere bubble, there is a pearl of great price, in

search of which we can never bestow too much time and pains ; and of which the Scriptures tell us, that we should do wisely and well, if, in order to obtain it, we should part with all we have, Matt. xiii. 44—46. I take it to mean neither more nor less than receiving the true religion of the gospel into our hearts, and giving up every thing that stands in the way of it. If we are enabled, by Divine grace, to make this good bargain, we become possessed of a treasure that shall always be suitable, and always satisfying ; a treasure that shall never be wasted or worn out ; and a treasure that shall abide by us in death, judgment, and eternity.

But I pass on to my story. My father, as we learned from his own lips, was a poor friendless boy, brought up in the parish workhouse. His father had gone to sea, and perished about the time of his birth ; and his mother, after weeping a few months over her fatherless babe, sunk under her sorrows, and left it without provision, protector, or friend. “ But,” said my father, when he related the melancholy tale, “ there was one of old who recorded, ‘ When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up,’ Psa. xxvii. 10 ; and I have proved it to be a truth. He raised up for me one friend after another, to supply the place of parents to me ; and what is more than all, in my early days he brought me, I trust in sincerity and truth, to seek his face and favour, and thus to find indeed a Father in heaven. On my mother’s death I was removed to the workhouse, the mistress of which was a kind, humane

woman, and took far better care of me than is usually bestowed on children left in my friendless situation. When I was between four and five years old, this good woman removed to take charge of a charity school a few miles distant. She felt much pity and tenderness for me, and kindly offered, for a trifling weekly allowance, to take the charge of me. But the parish officers thinking, I suppose, that my maintenance among the rest would be still less expensive to them, declined the offer, and I continued in my old abode, under the care of a very different matron. The person who succeeded my good friend in that office, was selfish, harsh, and violent; and all who were placed under her authority experienced tyranny and hardships, to which they had before been strangers. For my own part, the chief injury I sustained was in my moral habits, and that was the case with most of the young ones in the house. There was no longer a proper attention paid to order and discipline, and we soon acquired bad habits, and imitated the improper language and example of new comers into the house; who were not now, as formerly, restrained from such improprieties. As our new mistress was very violent when offended, we soon learned to practise slyness, in order to conceal from her knowledge any thing that we feared might irritate her; and thus such habits were formed, as, if suffered to grow, would have proved our utter ruin, and there is reason to fear that, in some instances, they did so.

“Young people indeed have great reason for

thankfulness, though they are seldom properly sensible of it, when placed under the authority of those who are watchful for their best interests, who instruct and encourage them in what is right, and restrain them from what is evil. Many a youth has, in after life, acknowledged with thankfulness, the benefits resulting from a well regulated authority exercised over his early years; and many a one has rued the neglect or false indulgence which left him to pursue his own course to his ruin.

"About three or four years," continued my father, "had gone on in this way, when a new clergyman came into the parish. He soon signified his intention of visiting the poor inhabitants of the workhouse, conversing with the sick, and catechizing the children. A few of the poor old people cordially rejoiced in the clergyman's kindness; but I am sorry to say, that the most spoke of it with many sneering and ungrateful expressions. There were few in the house who felt inclined to have their conduct examined into, or to give themselves the trouble of improving it. The young ones shrunk from the labour of learning, to which they had not been accustomed; and the master and mistress from an exposure of those neglects, of which they could not but feel conscious. However, the good gentleman pursued his designs, and communicated his instructions in such a kind, condescending, and familiar manner; said so much that we could not but understand; encouraged us so kindly to ask explanation or instruction when we desired it; and withal, discovered

so much real concern for our comfort and welfare, that in a little time many of us became interested and delighted by his visits, and even the most ill-disposed could find nothing to say against him. It was my happy lot to gain much of the good man's approbation and regard, and for this I have often felt myself indebted to my first good mistress; she had given me good instruction, and used me to good habits, which, though when she left they were too soon forgotten and laid aside, yet when thus favoured anew, were easier rubbed up in me, than they were admitted and acted upon by those to whom they were quite new. Depend upon it, my children, the first seasoning sticks long by the vessel; you may not live to see your children grow up, but even if you should leave them at five or six years old, if you have done your duty, you will have had opportunities of teaching them that which may never be forgotten; but which, through the Divine blessing, may spring and grow in their future characters and happiness; but mind, if you neglect them to that age, thinking them too young yet, and that it will be time enough by and by, you may perhaps be neglecting the only opportunity that will be afforded you of doing it at all; and mind, too, that while you sleep, and neglect to sow good seed in their minds, the enemy will be sure to be awake and busy, sowing tares.

"The manufacture of our house was a coarse kind of weaving for sacks, and other similar purposes; at this the young ones were all employed as soon as they became able. It was

heavy, laborious work, but we were only confined to it a certain part of our time; the remainder of the day we were allowed to spend as we pleased; and before we were favoured with the good clergyman's visits, it was always spent in play, generally polluted by profane or corrupt language, and frequently ending in quarrelling. But our kind friend soon endeavoured to give a more profitable direction to the employment of our leisure hours. By way of reward to those who were diligent in their learning, and of whom he received a general good character, he allowed them to work for two or three hours under his own gardener, in clearing the grounds, in which he was making great alterations. He took care to give to each a fair recompence for his labour, and this inspired a taste for pleasures of our own earning. I cannot convey an idea to you of the value I set upon the first twopence that thus came into my possession. I felt myself exalted many degrees in the scale of society, and reasoned thus in my mind:— 'Change of work is as good as play; I would rather dig or weed in the parson's garden, than saunter about, and fight, or cheat at play, as we have been used to do: besides, I might have sauntered, and played, and quarrelled, and fought a whole year round, without gaining twopence of my own by it; and then, if I can earn twopence, why not twopence more? why not, in time, my whole living? I need not spend all my days in a workhouse, though I am a poor friendless parish boy; who knows but I may one day have a trade and a home of my own?'

Thus stimulated by hope, I redoubled my diligence; in the house, to secure a constant recommendation to my patron; and in his garden, to deserve the recompence he bestowed, and ensure a continuance of his favour. Thus, my children, I first gained the habit of loving work. Be sure you teach your children to think it a pleasure to be usefully employed; encourage them in it, and reward them for it, which you may do at a very cheap rate. It is a great matter gained, when useful employment is not reckoned a burden or hardship, but a pleasure and honour; this greatly depends upon parents.

“ Another advantage gained by this expedient of our good minister, was that of making a very desirable separation among us. There were some boys who would not learn any thing that was good, but who were most apt at teaching the others all that was bad; they still preferred their game, and their coarse joke and vulgar song, to any thing that could be offered them in the shape of instruction, employment, or reward; but they were now a society by themselves. Those of us who went by the name of ‘the parson’s boys,’ had nothing to do with them, except now and then to stand a jeer or taunt. We had not time to be much in their company, and they were quite inclined to shun us if we had; from the fear of our informing of their bad language and bad actions, and bringing them into trouble and disgrace. It is a great matter to be rescued from the snares of evil company; so I am sure several of us youngsters at that time had reason to own. When I think of the progress in life

of some of my old companions of both classes, I am struck to observe how much the comfort and respectability of our life depends upon the choice of our early associates. Ah ! I could point you to more than one notorious poacher ; to one who has ended his days in transportation ; to another dissolute drunken fellow, who enlisted for a soldier, leaving a family chargeable to the parish ; and to several, who have proved, in one way or the other, the pests of society : they were those who, in childhood, might be seen in the workhouse yard gambling, cheating, quarrelling, sabbath breaking, and taking their Maker's name in vain. And I could point you to others, some of whom have advanced to a higher sphere in life, and all of whom have been respectable and useful in their several stations, who were rescued from that degraded group by the pious and benevolent exertions of the good clergyman. Mind, my children, while I say this, I desire to look above all means, to the Hand that directs. 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' and am made in any respect to differ from others ; but since the God of all grace is pleased to work by means, it becomes us to notice the operations of his hand, and to use those means on which we may expect—because he has in general promised, and in many particular instances manifested—his blessing.

“While our leisure hours were employed in the parsonage garden, our good master and mistress would often walk round, and speak to us in a kind and instructive manner. They also lent good books to such of us as they thought

most likely to make a proper use of them; and especially would they make such remarks as were likely to lead us to study and love the Bible, the best of books. I recollect one time, when we were weeding, master said to us, 'Boys, can you tell how weeds came first to grow?' When we could not answer, he bade us read the first three chapters of Genesis, and see if we could find it out. Then, the next time he came to the house, he made a nice little discourse, which explained it all:—how that, when man sinned against his Maker, it was the inlet to every evil: how the ground directly began to bring forth thorns and thistles, which, with all his care and labour, man cannot keep under: how our hearts bring forth the evil weeds of pride, stubbornness, and every other sin; and human life, instead of being one continued scene of beauty, plenty, pleasure, and happiness, like the garden of Eden before the fall, is disfigured by poverty, sickness, sorrow, and death. Then he told us, too, that the worst was yet to come; 'for,' said he, 'sin has planted eternity with thorns and thistles.' Awful indeed was what he said of the curse that is upon man because of sin; and he proved it all, word for word, from the Bible. But he did not leave it here; he told us next how the blessed Son of God came to do away the curse, by atoning for our sins, and turning us away from our iniquities; and how, when we were brought to receive his great salvation into our hearts by faith, all would be set right again. Sin would be subdued, affliction sanctified, and death converted into a

blessing ; it would be as if 'instead of the thorn' should 'come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree,' In this way the good minister attracted our attention, applied his instructions, and set us upon searching the Bible for ourselves. Under the Divine blessing, his labours, I trust, became truly beneficial to several of us. We were awakened to feel ourselves reasonable, immortal, and accountable creatures. We were brought to a sense of our danger and our necessities as guilty creatures. We trembled, and asked in earnest, What must we do to be saved ? Then we felt it to be good news, glad tidings indeed, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; that he is able to save to the uttermost, and will cast out none who come unto God by him. It was then our earnest desire to live in a different manner from what we had hitherto done ; not according to the course of this world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh, but according to the will of God.

" You will suppose that this change, however gradual and silent, could not pass entirely unnoticed by those around us ; and that from those who were otherwise minded, we had to endure many sneers and scoffs, and some more serious opposition. We are told in Scripture, that 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' 1 Tim. iii. 12 ; and Scripture is true in every age. The world does not like real religion any better now than it did in the apostles' days. If, my dear children, you are enabled, by Divine grace, to live a life of faith upon the

Son of God, to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, marvel not if the world hate you, nor complain as though some strange thing had happened unto you ; but strive to maintain a conscience void of offence, and then rejoice if you are accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Whatever trials we may have to endure in the ways of religion, still it stands true as the blessed word of God, who cannot lie, that they are not only ways of safety, but ways of pleasantness and paths of peace, Prov. iii. 17. I can assure you, my dear children, from my own happy experience, that there are enjoyments in true religion which can make the hard fare and mean accommodations, even of a parish work-house, far preferable to the luxury, splendour, and magnificence of the noblest palace without them.

“ But religion, while it tends to make us contented with the condition in which the providence of God has placed us, is no enemy to our using every lawful and honourable means for improving it. Indeed, I must say, that religion indirectly tends in many ways to promote our worldly advantage. It awakens a thirst for knowledge, and expands our capacities for receiving it. It inspires us with an honest ambition to excel in what we do, and to give satisfaction to those by whom we are employed, as well as makes us faithful and upright in the discharge of every duty. A consistently religious servant or apprentice, for instance, is in every respect a better servant or apprentice. Even an ungodly master or employer knows this ; knows they are the people to be trusted, and the people

whom it is to his interest to encourage and promote. I may freely say to you, my children, that religion awakened in me a general desire of improvement. From this arose the confidence and good will of those to whom I was subject, and thus, upon the whole, was bettered even my present condition. It also taught me to aspire above it. I longed for the honest independence of being able to get my own living; and for freedom from the society to which I was then confined, which was, in many respects, both distressing and injurious. I took the liberty of expressing my feelings on this matter to the good clergyman, who kindly approved of my wish, and promised to use his interest on my behalf. As I had some knowledge of the art of weaving, I thought it possible that in that line I might procure employment. It was but little that I could expect to gain for my labour; but I thought a very little would suffice, and I ventured to apply to the overseers of the house for their permission to leave the house in quest of work, and for some assistance in fitting me out for my enterprize. They were not very willing to grant my request, having fitted out several youths, who soon returned upon their hands; and my having no direct object in view, rendered them the more doubtful. It is probable that I should not soon have obtained my wishes, but that the master being seized with a severe illness, which disabled him for the duties of his office, I was employed by the overseers in several matters, in the discharge of which I gave them such satisfaction, that they agreed to re-

ward me, by giving me the assistance I needed, and moreover promised me a character for fidelity and industry. How it was that such a stripling was put in a place of trust, I have often wondered; but as we read of one of old, 'God was with Joseph,' and gave him favour in the eyes of those about him, and made all that he did to prosper, Gen. xxxix. 3; so I hope I do not presume in saying, that the same blessing was with me, marking out a plain path for me, and directing and supporting my steps.

"There lived in the town a sober, inoffensive old man, a weaver. He had in former times been defrauded by persons employed to assist him in his business, and therefore he had long left off employing any, and would undertake no more work than he could accomplish himself. He was now, however, somewhat enfeebled by age, yet being reputed the best workman in the place, he was often pressed with work, 'more,' as he often lamented, 'than one pair of hands could perform.' With some difficulty he was persuaded by the overseers to make trial of me. From my youth and inexperience he expected but little assistance from me, and could offer but a small remuneration. Three shillings a week was the most he could afford. To this he was, at length, induced to add the liberty of sleeping in an empty loft over the work-room. A rug, furnished me by the overseers, and a new suit of clothes, besides those I had on my back, was the whole property with which I removed to my new abode, and began life for myself; and three shillings my whole weekly income. You may

suppose I did not live upon delicacies ; and it was happy for me I did not want them. Firing I did not need, for I had nothing to cook ; and labour kept me warm. My usual fare was bread and cheese, or treacle ; and my liquor, water or skim milk. Yet surely I never was healthier or happier than at that period. Use your children to be content with plain fare. It may contribute very greatly to their future comfort. He who has learned to be satisfied with mean and scanty fare, is least liable to suffer from want or hardship ; while those who are used to gratify a pampered appetite, are strangers both to health and satisfaction. On the first Sunday after I entered on my new situation, my good friend, the clergyman, spoke to me in the churchyard, and told me to go to his house, and have some dinner. Afterwards I was called up into his study, and never shall I forget his pious and faithful exhortations. How he charged me to keep close to God in humble prayer ; to remember his constant presence ; to be faithful, upright, and diligent, in all my dealings with my master ; to employ well my leisure ; to avoid an ill companion, and an ill word ; and constantly to keep holy the sabbath day. Then he made me a present of a Testament, and charged me to be often looking in it. You have frequently seen the book, children. It was for many years my constant companion in the loom ; and now I would not part with it for any money. The good gentleman also told me, that as long as I conducted myself properly, and justified the opinion he had formed of me, I should be wel-

come to take my Sunday's dinner in his kitchen ; and that when I had an hour or two at leisure of an evening, I might still find employment in his garden. These, you may suppose, were great helps to me, as well as great encouragements. Practice, you know, makes perfect. I soon became much more expert at the loom ; and as my services were more valuable, my master voluntarily advanced my pay. At the end of the first year I was enabled to recruit my wardrobe, and even to lay by a trifle besides. By degrees, my old master and his wife, who had long felt quite averse to having any one in the house with them, became so much attached to me, that they made me an offer to board with them, and put me up a comfortable bed, in a little room near their own. I, of course, gratefully accepted their kindness, and enjoyed the increasing comforts of my situation ; but I never, never could forget the many happy hours I had passed in the peaceful solitude of my loft. I hope they were truly a blessing to me.

“ Thus I went on for eight or nine years, still enjoying the privilege of spending my sabbaths at the parsonage, and receiving from the good minister, not only the most valuable spiritual instructions, but also such assistance as enabled me profitably to employ my leisure hours in the week in improving my mind. At the expiration of the time I have mentioned, my old master died ; and as I had saved a little money, I was enabled to purchase the looms and other stock, of his widow, and take to the premises. It was at the parsonage house that I became acquainted

with your excellent mother, to whom I owe so much of the happiness of my life; and you, my children, an education that will either prove to you the greatest blessing, or rise up in judgment and awfully condemn you. Your mother was brought up in a sphere of comparative affluence. You have never witnessed any display of accomplishments unsuitable to the sphere in which she has since moved, although she possessed them. Nor have you ever seen her deficient in that practical wisdom, which is essential in the important work of instruction. May her children rise up and call her blessed! Your mother was the only child of one of the first tradesmen in a neighbouring town, and was reared in the fair expectation of a large fortune; but commercial speculations proved unfavourable; and the failure of a country bank deprived him of his all. He soon afterwards died, leaving his daughter in a state of indigence. Happy for her, my children, she had remembered her Creator in the days of her youth. Hence, these severe shocks of affliction served only to prove that her confidence was placed upon a rock, which troubles could never shake; and her peace flowed from springs which earth had never opened, and could never cut off. Happy, happy is he, my dear children, who has the God of Jacob for his refuge. Your mother had not been elated by prosperity, nor was she unduly depressed, much less degraded, by adversity. No time was spent in useless bewailings. She immediately sought a situation, humble indeed, compared with her former views, but useful and

honourable; and she applied herself with assiduous fidelity to the discharge of its duties. It was in the nursery of my honoured friend; where her unaffected humility, prudence, and propriety of conduct, secured to her the permanent esteem of that excellent family. She had resided with them several years, when the growing degree of humble prosperity with which it had pleased Providence to favour me, emboldened me to make proposals of an union which had long been the highest of my earthly wishes. Notwithstanding my early disadvantages, which were fairly stated, my application was not despised or rejected. After serious deliberation we were united, I trust, in the fear and under the blessing of Heaven. Ours has been a long pilgrimage together, and we have met with many trials and difficulties; but mutual love, and especially united confidence in God, have enabled us to surmount them all. We have reason indeed to say, both in respect to temporal and spiritual blessings, that not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord hath spoken, Josh. xxi. 45. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all our days; and they have been enlivened by the delightful hope, that we shall dwell together in the house of the Lord for ever, Psa. xxiii. 6. May every one of you, our beloved children, meet us there!"

This was, as nearly as I can recollect at this distance of time, my good father's relation. I shall next give some account of the changes that have since taken place in the family.

CHAP. III.—SEQUEL TO THE HISTORY OF THE OLD
MAN'S FAMILY.

I WILL now endeavour to recollect some further particulars in the history of our family, which I hope may afford some entertainment and instruction.

The year that opened with our family visit, proved the messenger of death to several of our circle. Poor George, as I before observed, seemed marked as his first victim; but living and dying do not go by likelihood; and George, though he did not live the year out, outlived some who then bade as fair for old age as the heartiest of my youthful readers. Ah! so little as we know what a year or a day may bring forth, surely the only way to be safe and happy, in youth or age, is by being always prepared for death and eternity, come when they may.

I spoke of my gay and blooming sister Catherine; a finer girl eyes never beheld. What family could help being proud of her? But, as the Scripture says, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" Prov. xxiii. 5. While we looked upon this lovely flower, it faded, and was not. No longer a time elapsed than from the first of January to the first of March, before she, who was all health and sprightliness, was carried to the silent grave.

One of the young ladies at the parsonage, who had been out on a visit, returned home unwell. Her illness proved to be a violent fever, and for several days her life was despaired of. Catherine, who was tenderly attached to the young

lady, waited on her night and day during the affliction, and could scarcely be prevailed on to leave her bedside, even for a few hours of necessary rest. The young lady was restored to health, but her faithful attendant, having received the infection, soon afterwards sickened and died. It was a cutting stroke to us all, especially to our aged parents; and keenly they felt it, though they bore it as Christians. They submitted, and said, “‘It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good,’ 1 Sam. iii. 18. We have proved our God too long to doubt his wisdom, love, or faithfulness now.” Oh, what a happiness it is to have the mind thus stayed, trusting upon God! It is, in general, the peculiar portion of those who have feared the Lord from their youth.

Concerning the best of children, thoughtful pious parents have anxieties to which all but the heart of a parent is a stranger. That which exceeds all the rest, is anxiety for the salvation of their souls. While in doubt about this most important and interesting of all subjects, they are tormented with dread, alike for the snares of life and for the stroke of death. The watchful eye of a parent, too, sees each child exposed to peculiar dangers, arising from its own peculiar disposition or circumstances, and his heart feels a corresponding anxiety. Such feelings were awakened in the hearts of our parents on behalf of their blooming Kate. They feared that the loveliness of her person, her warm, frank, and generous disposition, and a degree of impetuosity of temper and impatience of controul,

would expose her to peculiar temptations and dangers as she advanced in life, and was removed from under their immediate watchfulness and care. The situation in which she was placed was as favourable as possible. It presented no temptations to levity or display, and introduced to no unprofitable society or improper example. She saw in the excellent inhabitants of the parsonage house, what she had also seen in that of our venerable parents, that true religion is at once the source of genuine happiness, and the stimulus to every disposition and action that is excellent, amiable, and praiseworthy. It is a great thing for the picture of religion to be rendered lovely in the eyes of young persons. I do not say, that this can of itself subdue the natural enmity of their hearts; but it will generally press upon them a conviction, that if they do not embrace it, the fault is in themselves; while those who have seen religion, or the profession of it, accompanied by moroseness, selfishness, and gloom, have some plea for flattering themselves that they cannot be to blame in turning away from what is so repellent. I well recollect that, under our parental roof, our first ideas of religion were associated with those of pleasure. I am very, very thankful that it was so; and I have endeavoured to blend the same sentiments in the instruction of my own children; under the Divine blessing, I hope not altogether in vain. But to return to poor Kate. Whatever she pursued, she pursued with avidity and ardour, but not always with perseverance. When my dear parents, my

mother especially, conversed with us on religious subjects, Kate generally felt most acutely; but it was too often transiently. Impressions did not retain their hold upon her mind; and my mother, I know, often wept in secret, lest early promises should prove like early clouds, quickly passing away.

Our poor afflicted George was of a very different disposition, remarkably steady, quiet, and thoughtful. He seldom said much about what he heard or read; yet there was, from his childhood, so much habitual seriousness and conscientiousness about him, as led his parents to hope, at least, that he pondered good things in his heart. Afflictions are, in one respect, like the sun. They scorch up and wither the piety, or semblance of piety, that has no root; but draw forth and mature that which has. During his long affliction, poor George was rapidly and manifestly growing in grace; and his piety, which had hitherto been like the beauty of the rose-bud, modestly concealed, now fully expanded itself, and shed a delightful fragrance on all around. The object of his early choice and affections was a truly godly and consistent young woman. We had all looked forward to their union, as to the introduction of a choice and lovely addition to our family circle. But though Providence saw fit to disappoint our hopes in this respect, the scenes of affliction through which we were mutually called to pass, manifested, day by day, more of the solid excellence of her character, and doubly endeared her to us. For the last few months of

George's life, her time was principally spent at our house ; and truly edifying and encouraging was the conversation of this amiable young couple. It had indeed far less of earth in it than heaven. The one, ready and willing to take flight, and resign every earthly tie, anxious to scatter some parting blessing on all whom he held dear ; the other, while anxiously watching the object of her tender affections, assiduously rendering every attention that could alleviate his sufferings, and with a chastened eagerness catching at every gleam of hope of his recovery ; yet, on the whole, resigning him at the call of Heaven, and aiding his spirit to prepare for its celestial flight. Oh it was an affecting, yet delightful scene ! and I trust it was made a great blessing to us, especially to Catherine. Many pleasing circumstances attending and preceding her illness, and some which came to light after her death, gave us reason to conclude that the earnest and affectionate admonitions of her dying brother, and his amiable Rose, to whom Catherine was much attached, had sunk into her heart, and been the means of reviving and deepening former religious impressions. The serenity and confidence of her young mistress, too, in the prospect of death, (for she had been early and eminently pious,) tended also to rivet these impressions ; and from all that we saw of her at home, during the last few months of her life, as well as from the testimony of the good clergyman and his family, our anxious parents indulged the delightful hope that she knew the grace of God in truth. It was well that these

hopes were encouraged by circumstances preceding her illness; for such was its nature and violence, as to render her incapable of experiencing or expressing much beside bodily pain. Oh, what madness it is to defer religion to a death-bed! Had my poor sister altogether done so, we must have been without consolations of hope on her behalf. That she deferred it so long was the cause of many, many anxious fears to her parents; and would, in all probability, have been so to herself, had she been capable of reflection. But our God is "rich in mercy unto all that call upon him;" and she, I trust, did call upon him in sincerity and truth.

I mentioned that my father's new year's gift to Catherine was "Doddridge's Sermons to Young Persons;" and the little volume bore interesting marks of having been carefully perused. At the close of that affecting sermon, "The Reflections of a Pious Parent on the Death of a Wicked Child," she had pencilled, "Lord, grant that my dear parents may never suffer such distress. Faithfully and tenderly have they instructed and warned me: oh let not all be in vain! How different will be their feelings about my dear brother, How greatly should I prefer a death such as his, or that of my dear young lady, who I think cannot survive this night, to a life of all the riches and pleasures that earth can afford. O Lord, fix my roving, treacherous heart upon that which alone can fit me for life or death." Similar notes were added at other parts of the volume, apparently written in the chamber of her afflicted young lady, the

retirement and solemnity of which, we humbly hope, were of great and lasting advantage to her soul; though her attendance there proved the means of her own sickness and death. Thus, as my dear parents observed, under this trying and mysterious stroke, "What our blessed Lord does, we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. All is under the equal direction of wisdom and love. Temporal evil, we trust, has been productive of spiritual and eternal good; and our lovely blossom, we hope, is removed from a world of snares and dangers, to one of perfect safety and bliss." It was thus their minds were reconciled to the dispensation; and an unspeakable mercy and comfort it is to know, not only that whatever God does is right; but that he is our loving tender Father, and will do nothing inconsistent with the best interests of his children.

My brother George, also, bore this trial with amazing tranquillity, like one who had very little more to do with earth. Henry, my youngest brother, was most violently affected by it. My parents endeavoured to improve his grief by awakening serious reflections about his own best interests; and for a time he seemed to be deeply affected and impressed; but, poor fellow! those impressions wore off, and I do not know that they were ever renewed.

Soon after the death of my sister, one of my little ones, which had always been sickly, died, at the age of three years. Dear babe! it was hard to part with it; yet we endeavoured to resign it in the humble hope that the Lord Jesus,

the great and good Shepherd, had received this tender lamb into his heavenly fold; and sure the blessed Bible gives us reason so to conclude. Oh what a precious book it is! suited to every case and every circumstance. My poor dear wife laid it sadly to heart; and in her confinement, which happened soon afterwards, she was so ill that I feared I should have lost her; but it pleased God graciously to raise her up again, and I hope both the affliction and the mercy were sanctified.

It was the general opinion of the neighbours, that George would never, as the saying is, get up May hill; and my venerable parents stood, expecting to be broken with breach upon breach. His life, however, was prolonged to November, and my father was spared this second stroke, by being himself, before that period, suddenly removed to his rest. He expired on his knees in the act of secret devotion. What a blessed transition for him, to be one moment confessing and bewailing his sins in deep humility, (for such was eminently the character of his devotions,) and the next tuning his song of everlasting triumph unto Him who had loved him, and washed him from them all in his own blood! To his surviving family, it was, however, an awful and affecting stroke. We feared my poor mother could scarcely have sustained it; but she leaned on an all-sufficient arm, and as her day, so was her strength. She was spared to us yet ten years longer, a venerable pattern of faith, resignation, and holy obedience; and after bringing forth fruit in old age, she

was, at length, removed "as a shock of corn in his season" fully ripe. She had the unspeakable happiness of hearing my brother George, in his dying moments, bless God for her pious instructions, and the holy example of both our excellent parents, which he considered as the means of leading his young footsteps in the way of peace, from so early a period that he could scarcely trace its commencement. At one time, I recollect, he suffered some discouragement on this account, fearing whether the work of grace was indeed begun in his heart, seeing he could not, with some good people, trace the very period, and means, and circumstances of its commencement. But the good clergyman, who frequently visited him, bade him be encouraged in the consciousness of a sincere surrender of himself to God, of believing application to Christ as the only Saviour, a cordial love to holiness, and a desire of making continual progress in it. "These," said he, "are characters that no man possesses by nature. They are the work of grace in the heart; their very continuance and growth evidence their existence; and that, in a much more satisfactory manner than the most exact detail of a sudden change of sentiment and feeling, especially if that professed change be not accompanied with a corresponding and abiding change of character." I mention this, because I hope it may be useful to some, who lay too much stress on some particular experience, which they are perpetually relating, with great satisfaction, as a certain evidence of the safety of their state; and to others, who

fear to take the comfortable evidence of being the children of God, that arises from an habitual course of communion with Him, dependence on Him, and obedience to Him ; because they are strangers to those remarkable experiences which others describe. If we want to ascertain the life of a tree, a thousand certificates, as to the time and manner of its planting, will not afford us half the satisfaction that arises from its own growth and fruitfulness.

But to return to my brother George. His life, as I observed, was prolonged till November. During the long period of his affliction, he was daily administering consolation and instruction to those around him ; and we had reason to hope that his conversation and example were made useful to others besides our own family. True religion is an unspeakable blessing. There is no telling how far its influence may extend. Oh, it is an affecting thought, that our character and example, whether good or bad, may influence some whom we perhaps may never know, till we meet them at the bar of God. Happy they who shall then have the satisfaction of meeting some fellow immortal, convinced of the excellency of religion, and inclined to seek it, by the effects it produced on their character. For several days we were hourly expecting my brother's removal. The few expressions that then escaped from his lips, and the heavenly tranquillity that beamed from his pallid countenance, proclaimed that all was peace within. At length, without a sigh or struggle, he sunk in the arms of his faithful Rose.

After George's death, the old house, which was much larger than my mother and sister needed, was given up, and they occupied a part of mine. My mother possessed a moderate sufficiency. Sister Martha having also saved a little property, resolved to relinquish her school, and devote her time to the comfort of her remaining parent, and the assistance of such of us as had families. And truly it might be said of her, that in her humble degree she imitated Him "who went about doing good." My children, and those of my sister Rachel, are under the greatest obligations to her kind attentions and instructions; and I trust they are growing up to requite it. My sister Lydia had not an equal share in her assistance. Having only one child, she did not require it; but I believe the chief reason was, that she did not estimate it as highly as we did. Together with our little ones, sister Martha would gladly have instructed hers, but the offer was declined. They had but one child, and plenty to give it; and they were determined she should be qualified, by a boarding-school education, to enjoy it like a lady. My good mother saw with regret, that while the parents scraped and toiled, and coveted to add to their store, for the sake of this one child, the child was brought up in habits of pride, self-will, and self-importance; instructed in needless and unsuitable accomplishments, and left ignorant of that which is really solid, useful, and suitable to every station; and she faithfully and affectionately warned the parents of the injury they were doing to their child and themselves,

by this false system of education. I am sorry to speak of the faults of such near relatives ; but I cannot forget the consequences that ensued, and have ensued in thousands of other instances, and therefore I am induced thus to write as a warning to parents in general.

At the usual age of leaving school, my niece returned, pert, vain, indolent, and extravagant. She fancied that her dress and education placed her above all her relatives, and she despised them accordingly. She evidently despised even her parents, who still laboured to support her pride, and to perpetuate the means of supporting it. Her poor mother now began to see the error which had in vain been pointed out to her before ; and keenly to feel the neglect and unkindness with which she was treated by her former idol. How my dear father warned us against trusting in uncertain riches ; and uncertain in this instance, they proved themselves to be ! A considerable sum was, in the course of years, scraped together for the portion of this child ; and from over-carefulness and distrust of all security, my brother-in-law refused to place out his property, and kept it always in the house. It happened one evening, that the young lady was late in returning from a Christmas dance ; and her parents being gone to bed, the maidservant sat up to let her in. The girl, having dropped asleep, on hearing the bell ring, caught up the candle hastily, without snuffing, and in passing through the shop, the sparks flew off among some combustible articles. She either neglected to search, or failed in finding any cause of alarm ; but an

hour or two afterwards, flames were seen issuing from the shop windows ; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the family were roused in time to escape with their lives from the chamber windows. The house, furniture, and other property, were presently consumed. What the sum of money was that was destroyed, my brother-in-law always forebore to mention, having, to add to the regret necessarily attendant on such a calamity, the mortification of knowing and feeling, that the most serious loss originated in his own mistrust and perverseness. The small sum for which they had insured, enabled them to rebuild the premises, and begin business again upon a smaller scale. But their utmost industry and frugality never raised them beyond the needful supplies of the present day. It was in vain now that they looked for comfort from their child. Her education and habits had not fitted her for a reverse of fortune. She retained her former pride and love of pleasure, without the means of gratifying them. Discontented, indolent, and helpless, she was neither qualified nor inclined, by useful exertion to better her circumstances, but proved a burden to her parents in their affliction, rather than an alleviation of it. At length, unfit either for the wife of a poor man or a gentleman, she became the easy prey of a dissolute libertine in the neighbourhood. Her virtue was sacrificed to pride and love of finery, which she had not the means of gratifying ; and at length, abandoned by her seducer, she settled down into a life of disgrace and sin, and broke the hearts of her disappointed parents. Poor

things! they seemed greatly humbled by their afflictions; and I would fain hope that they, at length, sought consolation from sources which they had too long neglected, but which are not closed to the seeking penitent even at the eleventh hour. What became of my unhappy niece I could never learn; but should think, that ere this, she must have closed her wretched career.

Soon after the death of my mother, my favourite sister Rachel was left a widow, with six young children, and in very trying circumstances. My sister Martha then very justly considered it right to give herself up more entirely to her assistance; and as our family was growing up a little out of hand, we also felt it a duty readily to resign her. Rachel was of an enterprising, persevering disposition. She carried on the business of the farm for the sake of her children, in which she has happily prospered; and her children, under the blessing of God, are rising up to be great comforts to her, at least, so far as we can venture to judge at their age. Rachel is among the many who have found it "good to be afflicted;" and "the house of mourning" has been more profitable to her than "the house of feasting."

Good aunt Martha terminated her useful career, not at an advanced age, but mature in faith, and rich in good works; and her memory is blessed.

The last severe trial my aged mother was called to sustain, was occasioned by my youngest brother Henry. I mentioned his disposition in my first chapter; and, poor fellow! the

observations of my parents were fully verified in his after course. When he had served half his time, his old master died. His son and successor was a man of a different disposition, very uneven in his temper; at times foolishly indulgent; at others, capricious, hasty, and severe. Such was not the master for Henry; and on some occasion of difference, Henry deserted his service, entered the navy, and before we could trace his erring steps, he had embarked for Africa. This was sorrow indeed. More than a year elapsed before we heard of him again. My poor mother's heart was then somewhat revived by a letter from him, holding out hopes of his return. Those hopes, however, were never realized, though my honoured parent did not live to witness their disappointment. At the time of her peaceful removal to a better world, we were in daily expectation of seeing him. The fleet arrived, but brought no intelligence of him; nor have we ever received any certain tidings concerning him. The length of time that has elapsed, now leads us to conclude that a report we heard was correct, of his being carried off by an infectious fever; but of the particular circumstances of his death, and the state of his mind at that awful period, we still remain totally ignorant.

About the time that my sister Martha left us to reside with Rachel, the old miller died, and Rose, who ever considered herself, and was considered by us, as one of our family, proposed to occupy the apartments in my house which had been inhabited by my mother and sister Martha.

Nothing could be more agreeable to my wife and myself, and she has ever since remained with us in great comfort and harmony. She had several eligible offers; but the memory of her beloved George was too constantly present to her mind, to permit her ever to form a second attachment.

I am now growing an old man myself. My faithful partner is still spared to me. We have known many ups and downs in the world; yet we have ever been happy in each other; and, on the whole, ours has been a happy lot. In saying thus, I humbly hope I may include the prospect of being happy together for ever; for if all our happiness were to be on earth, we could not but be expecting its speedy termination. All that has occurred in our family varies little from the common lot of families, yet it fully confirms the many scriptural observations and exhortations of my dear father; and I now come to the same conclusion that he did, and which the wisest of men did before him: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty" (and happiness) "of man," Eccl. xii. 13.

EVENING VII.



EMINENT PIETY EMINENTLY HONOURED.

AT the earnest request of young Mr. Elliott, who was of a remarkably diffident, retiring character, his minister again became his substitute, and presented his second scriptural family sketch. Afterwards, a visiting friend, who was present, related an interesting fact on the observance of the sabbath; and two or three anecdotes on kindred topics, were pointed out by one or other of the females.



THE RESCUED FAMILY.

A Sketch from Scripture.

THE Bible may justly be denominated a history of the depravity of man, and the goodness of God. When there was on the earth but one pair of human beings, sin entered; and as men multiplied, iniquity and corruption more and more abounded. During the lifetime of the first parents of mankind, the earth was replenished with inhabitants, who for many generations

flourished together. The descendants of Cain seem wholly to have forsaken the worship of God, and to have given themselves up to wickedness; but in the family of Shem, the knowledge and worship of God were retained. This family was distinguished by the honourable appellation, "the sons of God;" while that of apostate Cain was denominated, "the sons of men." Alas, this line of demarcation was not long maintained. Observe how it was violated:—"The sons of God," the professors of religion, "saw the daughters of men," vain ungodly women, sprung from a race who forsook God; but "they were fair," and without regard to the advancement of personal religion in their own souls, the pleasures of pious intercourse, which sweeten and sanctify the conjugal relation, and the perpetuation of religion to the next generation by means of the pious education of their offspring, these sons of God "took them wives of all which they chose," Gen. vi. 2; and hence a flood of iniquity overspread the earth, and prepared it for its destruction by a flood of water. Surely such a fact ought not to be passed over without a caution to young persons professing godliness, to take care that they be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. The sacred writer clearly assigns these incongruous marriages as the principal and immediate cause of the triumph of wickedness, and the visitation of the just judgments of God.

But in the worst of times God has reserved to himself a remnant of faithful and devoted servants: and amidst the awful gloom which overspread the hemisphere of the antediluvian world,

here and there appeared a star of no ordinary magnitude and lustre. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him," Gen. v. 24. Noah also was "a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God," Gen. vi. 9; that is, he was sincere, upright, and conscientious in every relation he was called to fill among men, and this honourable character was sustained by genuine piety. Noah was thus happily preserved from the general contagion, and escaped the pollution that was in the world through lust; and he was made a signal monument of the distinguishing mercy and loving-kindness of God. The crimes of man called down the vengeance of Heaven; and He who had made all the generations of man to dwell upon the face of the earth, declared that for their transgressions he would cut them off, and drown the earth with a flood of water. Jehovah announced to Noah, the righteous man, his purposes of wrath on an ungodly world, and declared, at the same time, his purposes of mercy towards him and his house. But observe in what manner this mercy was to be experienced. Noah indeed was to be preserved by an act of sovereign mercy in God, but he was to be preserved in the way of faith and obedience. He received directions to build an ark, or vessel, of amazing size,* capable of containing himself and family, with two living creatures of every

* It is calculated to have been five hundred and forty-seven feet long, ninety-one feet wide, and fifty-four feet high. Dr. Arbuthnot computes the burden at eighty-one thousand and sixty-two tons.

kind. Now, had Noah been disposed to question, or raise difficulties, he might have reasoned on the impracticability of procuring materials, and constructing such an immense vessel himself; the difficulty of obtaining assistance, in what would doubtless be reckoned, by his ungodly neighbours, a visionary and useless enterprize; the unlikelihood of assembling and driving in the multitude of animals, wild and tame; the difficulty of navigating the stupendous vessel; and many other objections. But Noah was a faithful and an obedient servant of God; and having received express commands, he knew that his duty was not to question or hesitate, but to obey. Accordingly he set to work, and persevered during the space of one hundred and twenty years, notwithstanding all the weariness and discouragement he might sometimes feel in himself, and notwithstanding all the scoffs and jeers of ungodly men, that were poured out upon him. As he worked, he preached; and, in fact, he preached by working; for every stroke of his axe or his hammer proclaimed to the sinners around him that judgment was approaching, and that it behoved them to follow his example, and seek a place of safety. He, no doubt, also explained to those who came around him, and watched the progress of his work, at *whose* command, and with what design he had undertaken it, and exhorted them to break off their sins by righteousness, and seek mercy and salvation.

At the time when Noah first received the Divine intimation and command, it appears

probable that he had no family ; but about that time three sons were born to him. We can easily imagine the interesting inquiries of the children as to this vast work in which their father was engaged, and the like to which was not found with any of their neighbours. "Why," we may suppose them asking, "why do you work so hard, day after day, at this large vessel?" "Because God has commanded me."—"But what will be the use of it when it is finished?" "It is intended, my children, for our preservation through a dreadful flood, with which God has declared he will visit and destroy this wicked world."—"Has there ever been such a flood before?" "No."—"Then how can it be now?" "I do not know."—"But how do you know that it will come at all?" "Because God has told me."—"Why do not other men prepare an ark for the saving of their families?" "Because they do not believe the threatenings of God." Meanwhile we can suppose Noah's ungodly neighbours gazing and scoffing at his persevering labour, pointing to the cloudless sky and the solid earth, and asking, "Where are the indications of approaching calamity? Whence shall come this flood of water you speak of; from the heavens above, or from the earth beneath?" Without hazarding a reply to their captious and cavilling questions, the holy man proceeded with his work, his practical obedience all the while reproving their impenitence and unbelief. When, wearied with mocking such a man—and the most hardened will be wearied out by beholding a patient and

consistent continuance in well-doing—they had retreated to their worldly and sensual pursuits, we can suppose the godly parents cautioning their beloved children against following the corrupt example of those around them; we can imagine their overwhelming anxieties, lest the snares that had proved fatal to thousands should fascinate them; and we can listen to their earnest pleadings, that they, through Divine grace, might be preserved from the fatal influence of temptation.

One hundred and twenty years the ark was building; doubtless many who mocked the commencement of the work, expected that Noah would soon be weary of his enterprize, and that they should indeed find occasion to mock when, passing by his forsaken labour, they should say, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." But they were greatly mistaken: Noah had counted the cost. He began the work, he persevered in it, and he completed it, with unreserved devotedness to God, and in firm reliance on his gracious aid and overruling providence. During the progress of the building, Noah's three sons had attained to years of maturity, and formed for themselves family connexions. We are not informed of the character of the family at this time, whether either of the sons followed the example of their pious parent; it is certain that all did not, yet all, for Noah's sake, were permitted to share the temporal deliverance. For when the ark was completed, and the hundred and twenty years of God's long-suffering and warning to an ungodly world had expired,

1 Pet. iii. 20, 2 Pet. ii. 5, Noah received a special notice of the approaching desolation seven days before it took place. Jehovah said unto him, "Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous," Gen. vii. 1. The children of godly parents share many invaluable blessings for the sake of their relationship; but, oh, let it not be forgotten, that unless their pious example be followed, they will never share with them in such as are spiritual and eternal. What an interesting week must have been that of Noah's last warning, previous to his final entering into the ark! How would his attention be divided between providing every thing necessary for the sustenance of his own family, and yet more urgently and affectionately than ever, calling upon the sinners around him to repent! But as far as we know, not one was brought to repentance by his preaching, not one sought for safety in the ark: they went on, regardless of their sin and danger, to eat and drink, to buy and sell, to marry and give in marriage, until the last day came. Noah and his family, with sacred composure and believing confidence, entered the ark: the very brutes rebuked the stupidity of men, for they too came together to Noah into the ark, submissive to him, and peaceable with each other; yet even this seems to have produced no effect on the scoffing generation; perhaps even then they expressed pity or contempt at the credulity of Noah. But a very short time proved which were right—those who despised the warnings of Divine forbearance, and defied the wrath to come, or those who sought refuge from it in God's

appointed way. "And the Lord shut him in," ver. 16; a circumstance at once testifying the entire resignation of the inmates of the ark to the Divine method of preservation, the engagement of God to take charge of them, and the certain destruction of all who were without; and who, when the clouds began to gather, and the judgment was actually in view, would probably be crowding round and seeking admittance, however light they might have made of it before: but it was too late; the door was shut; no other means of safety were provided, and no access remained to that in which the faithful few were secured from the approaching vengeance.

And now the clouds gathered in portentous blackness; the floods descended, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up; not long the highest mountain tops afforded a defence to the perishing creatures who fled thither for safety; for the rain continued incessantly for forty days, and far surmounted the tops of the highest mountains, and swept a guilty world to desolation, for "all flesh died that moved upon the earth, and every man," ver. 21.

But Noah, humble, happy saint,
Surrounded with a chosen few,
Sat in his ark secure from fear,
And sang the grace that steer'd him through.

After about five months, the water began to abate, and the ark rested on one of the mountains of Ararat. After three months more, the mountain-tops became visible; and oh what joy must have thrilled through the hearts of the

little company at the sight! Forty days more elapsed, and Noah opened the window of the ark, and sent forth a raven to ascertain the state of the earth. The raven returned not; and Noah, considering this a favourable indication, a week afterwards sent forth a more delicate bird, the dove. She found no rest for the sole of her feet, and returned to the ark for shelter and succour. Tarrying another seven days, Noah again sent forth his faithful messenger, which returned in the evening, bearing a token that cheered every heart—an olive branch plucked off—a proof that some of the fruitful plains were dried, and the vegetables preserved. Hence the olive branch has been ever since regarded as an emblem of peace. At the close of another week Noah again sent forth the dove, which returned no more. Noah and his family, however, made no attempt to quit their retreat without the express authority of Him at whose command they had entered it; for this they had to wait more than two months longer, making, in the whole, somewhat more than a year's residence in the ark. At length, the Divine voice, in cheering accents, addressed the little company of favoured prisoners, and bade them go forth. No doubt the summons was gladly obeyed, and with feelings of ardent gratitude to their heavenly Preserver, they took leave of the friendly vessel which, at his command, had been their shelter through many a storm, and which, at length, landed them in safety.

Their first act was one of grateful thanksgiving. Noah builded an altar, and offered thereon

of every clean beast, and every clean fowl; that is, those which were appointed to be offered in sacrifice. This was not only a tribute of fervent gratitude and adoration, but also an expression of faith in the promised Saviour, through whom this mercy had been extended. In this act Noah also anticipated the great atonement; devoted the little ransomed band to the service of God; and sought further protection and blessing amidst the desolation which still surrounded them. These offerings were pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, and were immediately succeeded by his gracious promise, securing the regular changes of seed time and harvest, day and night, cold and heat, summer and winter, to the end of time.

In taking leave of this rescued family, let us not forget that sin is as offensive and provoking in the sight of God as ever; that his wrath is now threatened against the children of disobedience, and that a second desolation shall visit this our world. But *one* way of deliverance is provided and revealed. Jesus is the true ark, into which perishing sinners may flee and be safe; "neither is there salvation in any other," Acts iv. 12; but he is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," 2 Cor. vi. 2. But oh, if, like the worldly-minded sinners in Noah's days, we put far from us the thoughts both of danger and deliverance; if we suffer ourselves to be engrossed with worldly pursuits, and neglect this great salvation, how can we escape? Let us

beware; for our Lord has told us, that as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be when the day of judgment comes: many will go on hardening themselves in sin, and neglecting the remedy of the gospel, till ruin takes hold of them; then they will cry vehemently, "Lord, Lord, open to us," Matt. xxv. 11: but it will be too late; the day of mercy will be for ever past, and there will remain only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," Heb. x. 27. Oh, let us not hesitate, or linger, or trifle with such awful danger impending, and such sovereign mercy offered; but, without reservation or delay, flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel, Heb. vi. 18. See Matt. xxiv. 37—39; Heb. xi. 7.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.*

Two gentlemen, (one of them a minister deceased, the Rev. J. Cooke, of Maidenhead, who related this anecdote to the writer,) passing through the town of C—d, and having a little time to spare, visited the county gaol, and con-

* This fact was related by the late Rev. J. Cooke, of Maidenhead, in a party of friends at Knowl Hill, Berks. The writer, who was present on that occasion, thinks that the other party visiting the prison was the Rev. S. Douglass, or a member of his congregation; but is not certain of this. However, Mr. Cooke himself was one; and as several years had elapsed before it was thought of publishing the fact, the writer referred to Mr. C. as to the correctness of the narrative, which he fully confirmed. This was a very short time before his death.

versed with several of the prisoners, most of whom were differently employed; some working at their respective trades, some gambling, some swearing, and one, whose appearance greatly interested them, reading the Bible. The gentlemen noticed this circumstance to the person who conducted them: "O yes," he replied, "—— is for ever reading his Bible, and would fain persuade the rest to do so too. He is a very religious man, very religious indeed; in fact, his religion has brought all his troubles upon him: at one time he was as flourishing a tradesman as any in this town." Still more interested in this account, they resolved on inquiring farther into the matter from the individual himself, when a conversation took place to the following effect, and nearly in the following words:—

Minister. Well, my friend, you have the best of books there to beguile the dreary hours. I hope it affords you consolation in your present trying circumstances.

Prisoner. Yes, sir; I bless God it does. His statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

Min. Have you long been familiar with its sacred pages?

Pris. Yes, sir; several years it has been my guide and support.

Gent. I should rather have feared that you had not been guided by its rules of holy prudence and correctness. Many profess to love the Bible, whose inconsistencies of conduct are a reproach to the religion they profess. To

such, its consolations do not belong. It is not common for the Bible to conduct its conscientious and consistent votaries to a prison; and yet we have been told that your religion brought you here.

Pris. True, sir. I sometimes grieve lest religion should be reproached on my account; and yet I bless God I have the testimony of a good conscience; and I most humbly, yet firmly say, that religion *has* brought me to this place.

Gent. If you can prove that, I will answer for it, religion will bring you out again. Pray relate the circumstances.

Pris. I was a grocer, sir, in the most advantageous part of the town, and in a thriving way of business. My good old landlord died about three years ago, at which time my lease had nearly expired; but he had promised to renew it for me on favourable terms. In reliance on this, I laid out a great deal of money on the premises, which, however, would have paid me well had I been permitted to continue. On my landlord's death, the estate became the property of his brother, a man of wealth and influence, but a bitter enemy to religion. On coming to reside in our neighbourhood, and hearing that I made conscience of observing the sabbath, he vowed he would cure me of my foolish scruples, or else be the ruin of me. Accordingly, he sent several times on the sabbath to purchase goods at my shop, which I respectfully declined serving, and next day waited on him to offer an explanation of my conduct. He flew into a violent passion, and refused to hear a word I had to

say; but swore that if, on the following sabbath, my shop was not open, at least till service time, he would leave no stone unturned to effect my ruin. I, however, felt it my duty to obey God rather than man, and hoped that his heart would be softened. But, on the contrary, he immediately deprived me of the custom of the house, which in his brother's time had been many pounds in my way; he forbade all that were in any way dependent on him to lay out a farthing at my shop; he refused to renew my lease, or to allow me any thing for what I had done on the premises; and he established an unprincipled man in the same trade at the very next door, and supported him in selling goods at such a price, that it was impossible for me to compete with him. The customers deserted my shop; and by the time my lease expired, the stock in trade and furniture of my house were barely sufficient to pay off my just debts. However, though stripped quite bare, I was not out of heart; but trusted, if I began again in ever so small a way, I might obtain a livelihood for my family; and you know, sir, "a little with the fear of the Lord, is better than the great riches of many wicked." But even in this I was disappointed; for my relentless enemy pursued me still farther. He proceeded against me at law for pulling down an old out-house on his premises, though what I had done was for the advantage of the estate, as well as for my own convenience. However, I had no one to take my part, and judgment went against me; and I am sent here to pay the damages.

Gent. And how are you supported here? and what is become of your family?

Pris. My wife, sir, who was well brought up, has opened a little school, by which she is enabled to get a living, though but a scanty one; yet she makes no complaint. I fear she often stints herself to bring me little comforts; for the prison allowance is but scanty and coarse to one who has known plenty and comfort at home. Yet God forbid that I should murmur or repine! I often think with pity of the poor unhappy man that sent me here; and though I would not for the world exchange lots with him, I pray that he may be as happy amidst his wealth, as I am in my destitution.

The gentleman inquired whether this affecting case could be well attested. Finding that the statement was perfectly correct, and being a man of property, he took immediate measures to procure the good man's liberation. He also interested several other friends in his behalf, who each lent him a small sum, by means of which he was once more established in business in a small way. The blessing of Heaven rested on his exertions, and in a few years he was enabled to repay the money that had been lent him. Meanwhile, the sabbath-breaking shop-keeper, who had been set up to oppose him in his old shop, ran through a vast deal of property, and failed in business, chiefly at the cost of his patron. A series of personal and domestic trials had somewhat subdued the haughty and malignant spirit of this man; his conscience smote him for his former cruelty and oppression; and

he humbled himself so far as to acknowledge his fault, and offer to reinstate the object of his enmity in the spot from which he had unjustly expelled him. The offer was accepted. The shop formerly his own, and that occupied by the bankrupt, were thrown into one, in which, for many years, he carried on a most prosperous trade, and contributed largely of his substance to every benevolent and pious design. It should be observed also, that he had the happiness of finding, that his pious conversation and consistent deportment had, in several instances, been the means of producing salutary impressions on the minds of his fellow prisoners.

How just is the homely adage, "There is nothing lost by serving God, and nothing gained by sinning against Him!" How careful ought we to be of accusing or suspecting a fellow Christian of inconsistency, on slight grounds, lest by our rash censures we should speak to the grief of those whom the Lord has wounded! Job's friends, when they witnessed his grievous afflictions, charged him with being secretly guilty of heinous crimes: when the disciples saw a man blind from his birth, they concluded it must be a punishment for some extraordinary sin, either in himself or his parents, John ix. 2: and in this anecdote the visitor too hastily concluded that the good man must have been guilty of some inconsistency or imprudence, which had brought him to prison; but all were mistaken. These were not punishments, but trials intended for the exercise of faith and patience, and the manifestation of the glory of

God. Outward circumstances are no just criterion by which to judge of character. The wicked often flourish for awhile, and the righteous are depressed ; but we must take things in the long run, and especially look to the end. To the righteous there often arises light in darkness. They often live to see that their seasons of severest and most unaccountable suffering were not only times of peculiar enjoyment and usefulness, but preparatory to a high degree of outward prosperity ; and whether this be so or not in this world, assuredly it will be found in another, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28.

THE SCOTTISH PASTOR'S ADMONITION.

OF the late venerable Dr. Waugh, his biographer records that, in his ministerial visitations, his nationality was often strongly displayed, and this with most beneficial effect, both in sentiment and language. When, without any adequate cause, any of his hearers had failed to attend public ordinances so regularly as he could have wished, and would plead their distance from the chapel as an excuse, he would exclaim, in the emphatic northern dialect, which he used on familiar occasions to employ, "What, you from Scotland ! from Melrose ! from Gala Water ! from Selkirk ! and it's a hard matter to walk a mile or two to serve your Maker one day in the week ! How many miles did you walk

at Selkirk?" "Five." "Five! and can ye no walk twa here? Man! your father walked ten or twall (twelve) out, and as many hame every Sunday i' the year; and your mither too, aften. I've seen a hunder folk and mair, that aye walked six or seven, men, women, and bairns too; and at the sacraments folk walked fifteen, and some twenty miles. How far will you walk the morn to mak half-a-crown? Fie! fie! But ye'll be out wi' a' your household next sabbath, I ken. O, my man, mind the bairns! If you love their souls, dinna let them get into the habit of biding awa fra the kirk. All the evils among young folk in London arise from their not attending God's house." Such remonstrances, it may easily be imagined, were not often urged in vain.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.

BY DR. A. REED.

ON sabbath evenings, we were required to repeat what we could remember of the public services; we then went through our catechetical exercises, and at the end of these we generally took our places, my sister on the lap, and myself between the knees of our beloved parent. His countenance, naturally grave, would wear a serene smile, and he would enter into familiar conversation with us, answering our questions or proposing his own. We then chose a hymn, and he sung it with us; we thought no one could sing so sweetly. Afterwards he would caress us, and

smile upon us, and frequently he would close by pressing us nearer to his side, and saying, "God Almighty bless ye, my dear children." It was an hour of gladness. Our parents embraced us, and we embraced each other. At such a moment, there was but one thing which could heighten our joy; it was simply to hear our father say, as he often said, "Well, my dear, I should like the children to stay up, and sup with us to-night." If these words were uttered, whose parents so good as ours? or what children so happy? •Martha had, at this period, a vivid sense of the Divine omnipresence. I ascribed the clearness and power of this impression to one of these happy and beneficial sabbath evening exercises. Our father generally confined his conversations to one subject, that our attention might not be dissipated, and on this evening he chose the universal presence of the Deity. He read to us the 139th Psalm; he explained and enforced it in its practical tendencies. Afterwards we sung a part of it in the version of Dr. Watts: we were much interested: we proposed many questions on a subject so incomprehensible, but our anxious instructor gave them all a practical direction. Martha was particularly affected, and the impression remained on her: she committed the psalm to memory, and was constantly alluding to its prevailing sentiment. She would sometimes name it as a consolation to her parents; and a considerable time after she had received the impression, she employed it to reprove me.

EVENING VIII.



CHANGING SEASONS IMPROVED.

As this meeting took place just at the turn of the year, it naturally suggested topics suitable to the season. The minister and some of the elder friends offered a few seasonable remarks; and Mr. Reed, who was now returned from his long tour, presented the gleanings of his journey.



SOLEMN CALCULATIONS ADAPTED TO THE CLOSE OF A YEAR.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom," *Psa. xc. 12.*

ON reaching or approaching the boundary of another year, most of us, on reflection, find too much reason to adopt the expression of Moses, "We spend our years as a tale that is told," ver. 9. Those who are most serious and thoughtful, will be most ready to apply it to themselves; and those who are most gay and thoughtless, are most likely to fulfil it. Mankind, in general, are very apt to number their

days ; children and young people reckon forward, and count upon a great number of days and years to come, when they expect to be free from present restraints, and to possess many desired gratifications. Old persons generally reckon back, and take great pleasure in recounting the adventures of their early life ; they scarcely venture to say much about futurity, for they cannot in reason expect to number many years to come ; though in many instances there is reason to believe that they endeavour to flatter themselves with the possibility of a yet extended period : at least, the instances are very few in which persons are cordially inclined to admit the calculation that would intimate, “ thy days are numbered and finished.”

This kind of numbering the days, is very unlike that which Moses desires ; it is learned, not from Divine teaching, but from self-delusion and flattery, from the bewitching snares of this vain world, and the artful representations of the great enemy of souls ; and it leads not to wisdom, but to the grossest self-deception, and the most ruinous folly.

In numbering our days aright, we should begin by numbering our past days. The question which Pharaoh put to the patriarch Jacob may well lead every one of us to serious reflection. “ How old art thou ? ” Gen. xlvii. 8. How many days and years hast thou already lived in the world ? How many mercies hast thou received from God, thy Creator and Benefactor ? What returns of gratitude and obedience, hast thou rendered for them ? What im-

provement hast thou made of all the privileges and means of instruction thou hast enjoyed? What good hast thou done in the world during this long period? Which of thy fellow creatures has cause of gratitude for his intercourse with thee? Or who is there that would have real cause to lament thy loss, if thy days were now numbered and finished? In what degree art thou prepared for the termination of thy days? What account couldst thou now render, if called upon to give up thy stewardship? These questions are very, very humbling. Who is there among us that does not feel he has left undone the things he ought to have done, and done the things he ought not to have done?

We may next number our future days; and how many are they? Is even threescore years and ten a probable lot? Where is the churchyard, whose gravestones present a majority of this date? Do we not see many a little hillock covering the ashes of the babe, of the child; many an inscription bewailing the youth cut off in the freshness of his bloom; of the parent snatched from the busy scenes of life, the tender endearments of domestic society; while only here and there a silent memorial marks the repose of an aged pilgrim? And which ought we to reckon most probable—that we should be found among the many or the few? Do we not also frequently feel ourselves the subjects of disease; and are we not continually exposed to infection or accidents, which might soon cut short the brittle thread of life? And even reckoning life at its longest date, what is it? “as an hand breadth,”

"an eagle flying through the air," "a post," "a weaver's shuttle," "a shadow," "a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Surely, if we number future days aright, we shall be constrained to calculate that they cannot be many, and may be very few.

We should number the days of eternity. This cannot be done literally; for how can that be numbered which is innumerable, or that be measured which has no end? But we may set ourselves seriously to contemplate its vast immensity. If from a mountain of sand only one grain were to be taken once in a hundred or a thousand years, there would come a time when it would all be dissolved; but after millions of millions of ages have passed by, eternity will be always as long to come as when first we entered upon it. How such calculations baffle the feeble mind of man! and yet such are the calculations which Moses prayed for skill to make.

We may next inquire for what end are we to number our days? "That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." We read of one in Scripture, Luke xii. 16—21, who was so out in his calculation, that he reckoned upon "many years to come," in which to enjoy the fruits and goods he had laid up, while the message was on the road, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee;" and he is emphatically denominated a "fool." In contrast to such folly, it is the part of wisdom to live under a constant apprehension of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the nearness of death. It is wise also to compare time with eternity; to set, as it were, on one

side, the short number of our days on earth; and on the other, the long, the never ending days of eternity; and then seriously to ask ourselves which is of most real importance; which best deserves and will reward our attention—the fleeting things of time, that perish with the using, or the vast realities of eternity, that shall endure for ever? “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark viii. 36. Once more, it is wise so to number our days, as to compare our work with them; and surely this will rouse us to double diligence, and convince us that we have no time to trifle. Suppose that you were travelling towards a distant city, to put in your claim for a large inheritance; you knew that you must reach the town this very night, and make your application, or the inheritance would be lost for ever. Suppose, too, that you had been so very imprudent as to loiter away all the morning, and had made no progress in your journey, and now some circumstance had aroused you to reflection, surely you would call up all your energies, and pursue your way; hope and fear alike would urge you on, and no trifle would divert you from your path, no slight weariness induce you to linger in it. My dear friends, we have all business of infinite importance to transact; we have our immortal souls to save, heaven to secure, our God to glorify, our fellow creatures to benefit; we have but a short space to do it in, and, alas! of that little how much has already run to waste! how short at best, and how very uncertain is the future! Oh that we were truly wise, that we understood

these things, that we considered our latter end, and were roused, whatsoever our hands found us to do, to do it with all our might, for there is no knowledge, nor work, nor device in the grave, whither we are going! Eccl. ix. 10.

God is the source of true wisdom; we must beg of Him, by his Holy Spirit, to rouse us to serious consideration of the things that make for our peace, to impart to us a good understanding therein, and to preserve us from forgetting their importance, and sinking back to our former sloth and negligence. Oh, may we earnestly seek and obtain those Divine teachings which alone can make us truly wise, either for time or eternity, and "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ!"

CHASTENED ANTICIPATIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that," James iv. 15.

THE mind of man naturally anticipates, or looks forward to futurity, and realizes scenes, circumstances, and enjoyments yet to come. This disposition is in itself innocent and profitable; it is at once an evidence of the soul's immortality, and a stimulus to enterprize, diligence, and perseverance. Who would exert himself to-day, if he did not expect to-morrow?

But this, like every other tendency of the human mind in its degenerate state, is prone to misdirection and abuse: our anticipations in

general, are too low and bounded, in comparison with the dignity and duration of our nature; and, considering our constant and entire dependence, too much formed without reference to the will and permission of the Supreme Arbiter of events. Forgetful of our greatness, instead of anticipating and aspiring after glory, honour, and immortality, we cling to a clod, or eagerly pursue the vanities of an hour; and, forgetful of our littleness too, we act as if possessing a certain and extended term of human existence, and an absolute control over circumstances and events; and we arrogantly make our calculations, and pronounce our decisions. "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain," James iv. 13, and form the connexions of life, and share richly all its enjoyments. The disappointments incident to man, in this state of uncertainty and imperfection, might well teach us more modesty and hesitation; but we are backward to learn, and an express precept from Heaven was necessary to induce us to moderate our expectations from earth, and elevate them to heaven; and, indeed, we have on this subject, "line upon line, and precept upon precept." Among many others, the apostle James strikingly admonishes us against presumptuous anticipation, checking it by the humbling consideration, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14; and suggesting a more becoming spirit and language, "For that ye ought

to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." The sentiments which this passage inculcates, appear to be those of habitual consciousness of our entire dependence on the Divine disposals, and habitual acquiescence in them. Let us ever realize the fact, that our intentions will be carried into execution, our purposes be effected, and our plans succeed, just as far, and no farther, than as "the Lord will:" and let us ever cherish a willingness that it should be so; and this will tend very greatly to keep us in a proper frame for discharging the various duties of life, and for meeting its events, whether of a prosperous or an adverse nature.

Under the influence of these sentiments, let us form the anticipations of the opening year. As they respect provision for the supply of our daily wants, probably most of us have to depend, in part or in whole, on our own exertions for the support and comforts of life; but let us not forget our higher dependence. From whom do we derive the ability to labour? Who is it that has hitherto made our labours sufficient for us? And on whom are we just as dependent as ever, for the continuance of that capacity, and for its success? "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: it is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows," *Psa. cxxix. 1, 2*, unless the blessing of the Lord be added to the labour of your hands, to your basket and your store. Then let us not forget to seek that blessing, constantly committing our way unto the Lord; trusting in him, and doing good, while we plead his faithful pro-

mise, "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed," Psa. xxxvii. 3. Such a course, among other advantages, will be a preservative against engaging in any pursuit on which we cannot ask and expect his blessing. Can we say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, *and sin against him?*" No; He cannot will this, nor can we cherish such a thought, if we habitually realize his presence and control.

As it respects our domestic connexions, parents are anticipating the welfare of their children, planning and acting for their maintenance, their improvement, their general advantage. Children, perhaps, are anticipating the close of the period allotted to education, or their quitting the parental roof, to enter on the busy scenes of life; young persons may be anticipating pleasing connexions in life, and dreaming of years of happiness in reserve for them: let each admit the thought, and let it have its due weight—"If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Some fatal disease may be stealing on with silent haste, to cut you off from your cherished prospects; some accident may, in a moment, close your mortal existence; some unforeseen event may occur to thwart all your projects, and cut off your fondest expectations; therefore, prepare for disappointment: and if it comes, think not that some strange thing has happened to you, but endeavour to recognize the hand that inflicts sorrow, as well as imparts enjoyment; and seek a Friend whom no circumstances can alienate, a portion that nothing can wrest from your grasp.

210 ANTICIPATIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Recollecting the frail tenure on which we hold our dearest earthly connexions, let it be our care to improve them, while they are continued to us; let parents seize every opportunity of impressing useful and pious instructions on the minds of their rising offspring; let children carefully and obediently receive those instructions. Let both keep in mind the account to be given, of privileges and opportunities of improvement and usefulness, and so act, that whenever the connexion may terminate, the tears of separation may not be embittered either by remorse or fearful apprehension.

“If the Lord will,” that we shall extend our time another year: let time be more than ever redeemed for his glory, for our soul’s vast interests, for the good of our fellow creatures. “If the Lord will,” that we shall live, and enjoy the means of grace, the reading of his word, the ordinances of his house: let them not pass, as hitherto, neglected or comparatively unimproved, but let us “seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near;” or, having found an interest in his great salvation, let us “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” and “walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing.”

Adopting this sentiment, we acknowledge our mortality. “If the Lord will, we shall live;” but—if he see fit, we shall die. And what if *this year* we should die? Are we ready for death? “The sting of death is sin,” 1 Cor. xv. 56: have we fled for pardon and life to Him who died that sinners might live? “Except a man be born

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. Are we born again? are we become new creatures in Christ Jesus? Let not these all-important subjects be any longer trifled with; the time is short; death is near: let not a moment's delay intervene, ere we commit our immortal interests to the hands of the Redeemer, and seek earnestly the influences of his grace, by which alone we can be rendered useful in life, and happy in death. May it be our happiness to adopt the delightful sentiment of an eminent Christian—"If the Lord will that I live, he will be with me; if he will that I die, he will take me to be with him: to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

A HAPPY new year to you, reader! This is the common salutation of the day, and from an innocent custom we have no wish to deviate. May this year, on which we now enter, be a happy new year, indeed, to every reader of these lines! But we are too apt to speak without thinking, and use forms of expression without meaning. It may be worth while just to ask ourselves, when we offer, or when we receive, this salutation, what we desire for ourselves or our friends—what is necessary to constitute a happy new year?

Perhaps the wish in general includes health, competence, agreeable connexions, and peace of mind. These are very important ingredients in

happiness ; some of them absolutely essential to it. When combined, they place the individual in the possession of as large a portion of happiness as is allotted to man on earth. Does not the reader reply, "Yes, let us enjoy these, and what more can we desire?"

Good wishes are very well, but good endeavours are better ; and if your friend can suggest a hint or two, which may assist you in obtaining or promoting these very desirable advantages, it will be of far more service than merely wishing them to you in what are called the "compliments of the season." Our circumstances are much more in our own power than we are apt to imagine, and our wishes are often the dictates of discontent, pride, envy, or ambition, rather than the expressions of moderate and well-regulated desires, and the stimulants to honest and persevering exertion.

Nothing can be more absurd than to express a wish for this or that enjoyment, and at the same time neglect every means of obtaining it.

Not long since a *poor* man (I was going to say—yes, he is poor, for he has squandered his property by extravagance, and ruined his health by intemperance) was complaining bitterly of his afflictions, comparing his present circumstances of destitution with the comforts by which he was formerly surrounded, and especially lamenting his inability to obtain the advice of a doctor, for a complaint under which he was labouring. He had not, he said, known a day's health for years ; and his sallow complexion, pallid cheeks, and heavy eyes, fully confirmed

the assertion. I felt sincere pity for the poor man's afflicted state, and wished, with all my heart, that I could relieve him; but suppose it had been in the power of wishes to have conferred on him the benefit he needed, in what way must they have been exercised? I dare say if W. T. had been himself the wisher, he would have desired the most skilful medical men to restore him to health, and a good fortune to supply all his other wants; but if the wishing had fallen to my lot, I should have exercised it on his habits rather than his circumstances, and made him a sober and industrious man, without which, neither physicians nor money can make him healthy, wealthy, or happy. Improved circumstances would do him little good without improved habits. While his indolence and love of liquor continue, he would soon squander another fortune, and ruin a new constitution of body; but let him be temperate, and diligent, and frugal, and, in all probability, he will gradually also become healthy, rich, and respectable.

A certain family of my acquaintance are continually complaining of poverty, and sighing for what others possess. If they had but a better income, a larger house, handsomer furniture, and finer clothes, they think they should be happy; their time is spent in sinful murmurs and indolent wishes. But they are greatly mistaken. While aspiring after something great, they overlook the advantages which are in their own power; covet things not at all essential to their happiness; endeavour to make appearances

which their circumstances in life do not warrant; neglect to turn to the best account what they possess; and thus they are always poor. Wishing them a happy new year, what is it but wishing that they may become moderate in their desires, diligent and persevering in their exertions, frugal in their expenses? and then, without any change in affairs independent of themselves, they may become rich, contented, and respectable.

There are some individuals who complain bitterly of their connexions in life; every body is unkind to *them*—every body thwarts *their* wishes—no one will go out of the way to serve *them*—nothing can be done for *them* at the right time, or in the right manner—every thing goes amiss—even the very elements seem to conspire against them—it is sure to rain when they want to go out, etc. etc. Well, surely theirs is a pitiable and singularly unhappy lot, that *nothing* connected with them should be agreeable! But here is the secret of the business—they are selfish and unreasonable. While anxious to have all their own wishes and whimsies gratified, they are careless whom they incommode and oppose; they expect that every thing should give way to them; that their business should be constantly attended to, with whosoever's it may interfere, or however they may neglect what is expected of them; and the more they are gratified, the more unreasonable and discontented they become; until, because all the world cannot be turned out of its way to meet their caprice, they fancy that all the world

is up in arms against them. Poor irritable mortals! we wish you a happy new year: and in what must it consist? Shall we wish you a new circle of friends, and new circumstances surrounding you? No; the remedy must go as deep as the sore: we must wish you to become masters of yourselves, to conquer your own evil tempers, and then all around you will become comparatively smooth. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly," Prov. xviii. 24. He who would be loved, must render himself lovely: he who would have others comply with his wishes, must comply with theirs: he who expects others to be punctual in serving him, must be regular in fulfilling their just expectations: he who would pass smoothly through this world, must remember that it was not made for him, and must stand prepared to meet with meekness and firmness its unavoidable crosses and disappointments. Let these complainants adopt this line of conduct, and, in all probability, they will find their connexions as agreeable, and their circumstances as favourable as those of their neighbours.

Peace of mind—and how shall this be attained? Consider how it is forfeited. See yonder rich man; he has health, and wealth, and splendour, and agreeable connexions; but he is not happy: how should he be? His goods are ill-gotten; his conscience is not at ease; he hears the cries of the widows and orphans whom he has wronged; of the poor whom he has oppressed; he has heard of the curse of the Lord being in the habitation of the wicked; of riches

corrupted, and garments moth-eaten, and the canker of ill-gotten treasures eating the flesh as it were fire; and he trembles lest these curses should be against him. Look at that disobedient, profligate youth; he goes after his vicious pleasures in spite of all the remonstrances of his tender, pious parents; they weep over his unkindness, and are sinking with sorrow to the grave on account of his vices and follies; and is he happy? No such thing; in his gayest moments he would be a dog rather than himself. Look at that young person, who has formed an attachment contrary to the advice of her parents, and is carrying it on in concealment; and is she happy? Look at those who have been taught the duty of observing and honouring the sabbath, yet who alienate it to their business or their pleasures. Look at those who have long heard the gospel, and slighted it; and who know its terrors are pointed against themselves, yet who harden their hearts against the conviction; who know that death is coming, that they have no preparation for it, yet put far from them the evil day—and whatever may be the outward circumstances of these individuals, assuredly they are not happy, they have not peace of mind. And how can they attain it? They must seek peace with God, in humble penitence, at the foot of the Redeemer's cross; and there sacrifice every sin that stands in the way of it; they must comply with the suggestions of conscience, and render restitution wherever they have committed injury. If they are enabled to do this, their bosoms will soon possess a peace

unknown before, and this will be a happy new year indeed to them. To sum up the substance of these remarks. If happiness consists in health, competence, agreeable friends, and peace of mind, let us learn to cultivate them. Health will be promoted by temperance, regularity, and activity : the way to have enough, (and competence means no more,) is to desire but little, and to be diligent, frugal, and contented : the way to have friends kind and agreeable to us, is to be uniformly so to them : the way to have peace of mind, is to keep a clear conscience—a conscience that harbours no wilful sin, that is both purified and pacified by the blood of Christ, an application of which involves preparation for death, and a good hope for immortality. May such a portion render this a happy new year to every reader of these lines, and to their sincere friend, the writer.

Mr. Reed being challenged to bring forth his memorandum book, at length complied. He said he had no wonderful adventures to relate. He had been mercifully preserved and prospered on his journey, and desired to raise an Ebenezer of gratitude to Him who is the God of salvation, and to "whom belong the issues from death." He did not think that it would be interesting to the company, or exactly consonant with the design of their meeting, to describe the various towns he had visited, or the country through which he had passed; all he had to offer consisted of a few traits of character which he had seen

developed, and which he thought might furnish some hints of instruction.

GLEANINGS ON A JOURNEY.

I.—THE CONFIDENTIAL SERVANT.

WHEN the coach stopped to change horses, the coachman hastened down from his seat, loosened the trappings of the horses, turned them back in a neat and careful manner, yet with the utmost despatch, gave each horse a rub, and turning them into the stable, charged the ostler to take good care of them. "Ho, ho, coachman," said a passenger on the box, "I spy something." "What's that, sir?" "I give a shrewd guess whose property those horses are." The coachman made no reply, but hastened into the house, got a mouthful of bread and cheese and a draught of beer, and was again seated on his box in a minute. The passenger renewed his remarks. "I say, coachee, I never till now knew that you drove your own horses." "No more I do, sir," was the reply. "I never had a horse of my own." "Ah, so you're pleased to say; but I never saw a man pay such attention to horses that were not his own." "Oh," said the honest coachman, "is that all; why though the horses are not mine, they are my master's; and I should not have lived in his service, as I have done, twenty years, and found him always a kind master and a good friend, if I had not minded his business

as if it were my own. He has done me many a good turn, and set me on from one situation to another ; and I should not have the heart of a man, if I failed to do a good part by his property."

A short distance farther, a fellow servant ran out to meet the coach, and gave the coachman two small parcels, saying, "John, master desires you would take care of these for the keeper at — and — gate ; 'tis the money for the — coach." "What, it was forgotten, I suppose?" "No, no ; but master don't care to trust —" (the driver ;) "he has played several dirty tricks, and if he don't mind what he is about, he'll be turned off altogether : so he would before now, only mistress begged so hard, for the sake of his poor wife and children, and so he is to be tried a little longer, but not trusted." "Poor fellow," replied the coachman. "Well, say nothing about it, I'll take care of the money : but, oh, if he'd the heart of a man, he could not bear not to be trusted himself. 'Tis a sad pity when people don't know what is their own, but throw away all that is worth keeping, for the sake of what will never do them any good."

II.—A TOUCHING TALE.

A MILE or two farther, the coachman pointed us to a neat house, about a hundred yards from the road, where he said his good old master and mistress resided ; a plain decent-looking man was waiting at the gate ; he mounted the coach without ceremony, and it proceeded. From

some soothing expressions of the kind-hearted coachman, and inquiries after his children, as well as from the quietly mournful expression of his own countenance, it was evident the stranger was in trouble. They both perceived that sympathy was excited, and with much simple feeling told us the poor man had just buried his wife, and was the father of four children, the eldest under five years of age, the youngest three weeks. Each spoke of the deceased mother as one who had filled her humble yet important station well, and whose loss was and would be deeply felt. "My situation," said the widower, "is very distressing, yet it might have been worse: I am not without friends; my good master and mistress are very kind to me, very kind: they are kind to all their servants. Mistress is as much concerned about the children as if they were her own, (my poor Mary lived with her for years before we were married,) and she has advised me what to do for the best with the children; and, thank God, I can earn enough to support them. I have just been to carry the little baby to its grandmother, and now I am better satisfied; but mistress says, I must go and see them as often as ever I can, for fear I should lose the love of them." We were pleased with the good feeling discovered in this artless narrative, and felt a hope that the poor man was not a stranger to higher consolations: a word to this effect was dropped; it was evidently not a new language to the mourner. "Yes," he replied, with many tears, "I *must* look to the Lord: He is the only refuge in trou-

ble. I *have* looked to Him, and He has not forsaken me. What should I have done in my affliction, if I had not known Him? And what would my poor Mary have done?—but she died very happy, very happy.” We were delightfully reminded of those sweet lines of Cowper—

“ O, child of sorrow, be it thine to know
That Scripture only is the cure of woe !
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its perfume o’er the Christian’s thorny road !
The soul, reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song ! ”

The few remaining miles of our journey elicited several equally pleasing sentiments from the poor widower. We parted with feelings of sympathy and esteem, and with earnest prayer that Divine consolations might soothe his heart, and that providence and grace might smile upon his helpless offspring.

III.—PRESENCE OF MIND : A PRACTICAL HINT.

BUT the immediate cause of the poor woman’s death must not be overlooked, as it affords a striking caution against an imprudence too common among persons attending the sick and lying-in. The age of her infant told us, that this poor woman had died in such circumstances. “ But,” said the widower, “ it can hardly be said she died in child-bed, for she went on exceedingly well for more than a week, no person could be better ; she died through fright. A neighbour, who had just assisted her

in getting into bed, took the baby to the fireside to feed it; in doing so, the child choaked; she instantly screamed out that the child was dead or dying, threw it down on the mother's bed, and ran screaming out of the room, instead of attempting any thing for its relief. The agitated mother rose in bed, took up the child, patted its back, and it was presently relieved: but *her* life was sacrificed; the milk instantly forsook its natural course, and flew up into her head; fever came on, and in about a week terminated her existence."

Was it cold-hearted, when hearing such a tale, to moralize, and think how vastly important, how absolutely essential, in those especially who have the care of the sick, is presence of mind, or self-possession? Let young people endeavour to acquire this habit, that in cases of emergency, instead of being mischievous, they may be useful, and perhaps instrumental in saving the life of a fellow creature.

Mrs. Clarke observed, that in the affecting instance which Mr. Reed had mentioned, the life of the poor woman was sacrificed to a false alarm; but, added she, painful circumstances often occur, which it is necessary to communicate to persons in similar circumstances with that of the poor woman. In such cases, the greatest caution should be observed; not secrecy or mystery, for the latter often excites suspicion and conjectures more painful than the knowledge of the fact; and it is generally use-

less to conceal that which after all *must* be known; and the knowledge of which, if accidentally or abruptly communicated, may produce effects as lamentable as that related; but the truth should be told in a prudent, cautious, gentle manner.

Many years ago, a lady having died soon after her confinement, it was deemed necessary to conceal the fact from a friend of hers who expected soon to be a mother. Every precaution was used; newspapers were carefully concealed; every person who came to the house was charged not to mention the circumstance; even a species of deception was practised—for the lady was assured that her friend was perfectly well, and desired to be kindly remembered to her. At length, some ladies called who resided many miles distant, and as it was very unlikely they should know anything of the parties or circumstances, no one thought of giving *them* a caution. They, on the other hand, not supposing that the matter was a secret, observed, what a very great loss had been sustained by her family and friends, in the death of Mrs. —, of —. The shock thus given was severe indeed: it occasioned serious indisposition; and in many instances might have proved fatal.

The following fact may serve to show the good effects of a prudent, rational, and upright course in similar circumstances. During the confinement of a lady, it was discovered that a room in a distant part of the house was on fire; the nurse screamed with terror, and entreated that her mistress might not be

informed of the circumstance, or it would very likely terminate her life. "No," said the husband, "I know your mistress better than you do; she will receive the news with calmness, if prudently communicated: she would be far more likely to be alarmed by hearing a bustle while kept in ignorance of the cause, or by being at last hastily informed, which must be done, if it should become necessary to remove her to a place of safety." The gentleman pursued his own course, and gently informed his wife of the circumstance; assuring her that timely means should be adopted for the removal of the family if necessary, and desiring her not to be alarmed at his absence, or the bustle she might hear in the house. She felt gratified at the openness with which she was treated, called in reason and religion to her aid, and was enabled not only to possess her mind in calmness while the danger lasted, but even gave directions for the preservation of plate, papers, etc., and for preparations to remove herself and infant if required. In less than an hour her husband had the happiness of assuring her that the danger was over, and of uniting in thankfulness to the Preserver of men, for his great mercies.

Mr. Reed proceeded with his memoranda.

IV.—THE WISE RESOLUTION.

A COACHMAN was repeatedly invited by some of his passengers to take a glass of spirits and

water, but constantly refused. On being asked whether he never took anything of the sort, he replied, "Very seldom indeed. I very seldom have occasion for it; and I *never* take it on the road. If once I began, I might take a glass with one, and a glass with another, till I should not see how to guide my horses. Why, that's how the — coach got upset the other night. The coachman stopped here, and stopped there, taking his glasses, till he found himself behind time; and then to gain his ground, he dashed along, not heeding any danger, nor turning aside for any thing he met, till he ran against another carriage, the driver of which was as mad-headed as himself, and the — was fairly upset."

"And were any lives lost?"

"I believe not; no one was killed on the spot, but a deal of mischief was done: and they talk of making him stand to it, because it is proved that he had taken a glass too much; and that's soon done if one takes a glass at all."

"Well, coachman," returned the gentleman who had so repeatedly urged him to drink, "I think you are about right; but I suppose there are few coachmen of your mind."

"More, sir, than there used to be; and considering the number of coaches that run, and the rate at which they get over the ground, there are much fewer accidents. Don't you know —, who drives the — on your road? all the persuasion in the world could not induce him to take any thing stronger than water—and where's a healthier man than he is?"

"Very true, coachman; I know him well, .

and have many a time tried hard to persuade him, but in vain. I fancy he has made a vow."

"I believe he has, sir. Some years ago he was one of the hardest drinkers on the road, and he pretty well drank himself into the grave; and the doctors told him what was the cause of his ailments, and that nothing could cure him but leaving off his glass; and so he made a bold resolution, and broke it off all at once: for he knew it was of no use to parley with it; and by that means he is alive and hearty to this day." An uncommon instance of resolution and perseverance; however, it serves to show that the strongest habits may be broken through; and nobody knows what they can do till they try.

V.—"I BELIEVE SHE IS DEAD, THOUGH."

THESE words were spoken with a degree of frivolity, yet they conveyed a very solemn impression to the mind of the writer. They were uttered on a stage coach: a passenger, who sat just behind the coachman, tapped him on the shoulder, and observed that he wished to be set down at the foot of — hill. "I suppose," said he, "the coach still runs by the turning to —, though I hear the road is strangely altered since I was last this way. Do you know Mrs. — of —?"

"Yes sir, very well; that is, I don't mean to say that I am acquainted with her, but I have often seen her; she drives a pair of beautiful ponies; and what a pretty place she has got there! Her husband laid out a deal of money upon it,

and there certainly is not a more complete place in the neighbourhood."

"I shall pay my respects to her to-morrow, and get a day's shooting on her grounds; she visits at the house of my relations."

The passenger proceeded to recall some days of pleasure he had enjoyed under the hospitable roof of the wealthy widow, and again anticipated the pleasures of the social circle. The coachman paused a moment, and then abruptly exclaimed, "*But I believe she is dead, though.*"

"Dead!" rejoined the astonished passenger, "you don't say such a thing?"

"She certainly is, though, if I am not very greatly mistaken; I am pretty well sure I heard it some months ago; and I know I have not met the phaeton and ponies this many a day. I say, Jem," addressing the ostler at the inn where we changed horses a few minutes afterwards, "can you tell me what is become of Mrs. —, that used to drive a phaeton and pair?"

"She's dead, sir—been dead almost a year."

"Dead, is she! Well, I thought as much," said the coachman, and apparently dismissed the subject from his mind.

"Dead, is she!" said the more interested passenger, "*that makes all the difference,*" and sunk into a state of deep thoughtfulness, which lasted until the coachman drew up, as directed, to set down his passenger at the foot of — hill. What might be the train of his meditations, or whether a tract put into his hand by a fellow passenger at parting might have had

any influence in giving them a serious and suitable direction, is altogether unknown. The incident, however, gave rise to the following reflections: it was a solemn truth, though apparently spoken without much solemnity of feeling—*She is dead, and that makes all the difference.*

It makes all the difference as to the value of her worldly possessions. What avails her now, that she possessed an elegant mansion, costly furniture, tasteful decorations, highly cultivated gardens, a beautiful park, an admired equipage? To her they are all nothing, for she has no more a portion in any thing that exists under the sun. She *was* the wealthy, the gay, the liberal, the admired Mrs. —; but what *is* she now?

“Here lies the great—false marble, tell me where?
Nothing but heaps of mouldering dust lie here.”

Perhaps much of her time had been devoted to acquiring, and arranging, and preserving, and enjoying her possessions; but death made “all the difference;” for when the summons came, not all her possessions could obtain one hour’s respite: perhaps they would have been gladly given in exchange; but no such barter could be permitted. “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and

the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish," Psa. xlix. 7—12.

Death "makes all the difference," as to the dependence and expectation of others upon the individual. Our fellow traveller had calculated on visiting the hospitable widow; he had assured himself of a kind and cordial welcome; he had calculated on the pleasures he should enjoy in her society, or under her permission; but that one word defeated all his expectations, "She is dead." Perhaps many were in a much more important sense dependent on her; their employment was in her service, their support was derived from her liberality, their expectations from her promises; but her breath went forth, she returned to her earth, in that very day her thoughts perished, and those who had placed their hopes, and dependences, and expectations upon her were disappointed, and at a loss. No longer can they, in their necessities, appeal to her benevolence and compassion, or plead her promises: they have been painfully taught how vain a thing it is to put trust in princes, and in the son or the daughter of man, in whom there is no help, Psa. cxlvi.

It is affecting to observe the change that takes place in a neighbourhood, in consequence of the death of one person of wealth and influence. How many family connexions and social circles

are broken up; how many poor persons are thrown out of employment; how many domestics have to seek new situations, and, as it were, begin the world afresh! If the individual were benevolent and pious, what a loss is sustained by the various charitable institutions, and in the church of God! Where now shall we look for the liberal contributor, the efficient officer, the able advocate of the cause of religion, education, humanity? "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" "Happy is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God;" and encouraging is the thought to every one sincerely concerned for the stability and welfare of the church, that "the Lord liveth," and though every earthly supporter should fail, "he is alive for evermore," and "will never fail nor forsake."

But great as are the relative consequences of the death of an individual, it is of himself that it may emphatically be said, "It makes all the difference." The soul's eternal state is fixed at death. While life lasted, the season of probation was extended, the gospel proclaimed, the voice of mercy called the most guilty to repentance, the finger of mercy pointed to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; the heralds of salvation, in every direction, were calling upon the sinner to "flee from the wrath to come," and assuring her that "yet there was room;" but at death "the door was shut." If the soul had fled to Christ for salvation, all was well; but if not, there remained no more hope,

no way of escape, but the "blackness of darkness for ever." Oh, what an awful difference death makes in the condition of one who was engrossed in the pursuits and pleasures of earth and time, and regardless of the soul and eternity! That Saviour whose grace was despised, declares, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh," Prov. i. 24—26.

But if the departed spirit had been united to Christ by a living faith, and the life on earth consecrated to his service and glory, death has made a glorious difference. While here, the renewed spirit was burdened with the remains of sin, and corruption, the law of the flesh warred against the law of the mind, continually disquieting, and often defiling, the subject of the conflict, and causing him to exclaim, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then, the things of time and sense divided and distracted and oppressed the wavering mind, and left but half for God; then the powers were very limited, time and opportunities were scanty and few, and there was continual cause for lamentation, how little was effected for the glory of God. Then, too, the body was the subject of weakness, weariness, and disease; the trials, and uncertainties, and anxieties, and privations, and bereavements of life pressed upon the spirits; deep called unto deep, the waves and the billows of affliction perhaps

rolled over each other in rapid succession, projects were crossed, and expectations disappointed; all on earth was proved to be vanity and vexation of spirit. But "death has made all the difference." Now the happy spirit has burst its shackles, and dropped its clay; it has soared to the world of bliss and perfection. It sees God as he is, and serves him as it ought.

As with a seraph's voice it sings,
It flies as on a cherub's wings.

There sickness and sorrow, pain and death, can never reach it more; it is admitted within the gates, to the city where there is no more pain nor sorrow, no more night, no more death. The Lamb in the midst of the throne now feeds it, and leads it to fountains of living water, and God has wiped away all its tears.

How unspeakably valuable is true religion, when viewed in connexion with approaching death! Ere long it will be said of each one who made or who heard these remarks on the stage coach, "He or she is dead—that makes all the difference." This consideration reduces all worldly things to their real insignificance, but it also exalts religion to its real and intrinsic value and importance. According as we have, or have not possessed *that* "one thing needful," the difference made by death will be on the side of endless bliss or endless woe; for then shall we return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, Mal. iii. 18.

VI.—THE JEW PEDLAR.

ON mounting a stage coach, (said Mr. Reed,) I took my seat beside an elderly gentleman. The box seat was occupied by a very fashionably dressed, dashing young man. Shortly afterwards a Jew pedlar took a seat near, when the young man addressed the Jew, "Do you recollect, when travelling on the road, some young ladies presenting you with religious tracts?" "Yes, very well," replied the Jew. "I hope," rejoined the young man, "that you read those tracts and attend to them, for they contain the truth. I do not speak from my own experience: for, I am sorry to say, I do not understand such things myself; but I have just left those young ladies, one of whom is now in a dying state, and her mind is consoled and supported by those truths which she has been so much concerned to circulate among those around her. Have you read the tracts she gave you?" "Oh," replied the Jew, "I read the Talmud." The young man then asked if he had read the New Testament, and compared it with the prophecies of his own Scriptures. He made some evasive reply, and both his fellow passengers concurred in urging upon him the perusal of the Old Testament, and careful inquiry into the fulfilment of its prophecies, in which inquiry they verily believed he would find the New Testament an invaluable and infallible guide. He still replied, with unmoved indifference, that he read the Talmud. The young man again urged him to peruse the tracts which were so consolatory to

the dying friend who presented them; and shortly afterwards the Jew took leave of his companions. During the short remainder of their journey, the elder gentleman took occasion to urge on his fellow traveller the importance of yielding his heart and life to the influence of that religion which he had been advocating, and from which he had witnessed such pleasing effects in the hour of sickness and death. The young man admitted the truth and force of the appeal, and expressed himself grateful for the kind interest manifested by a stranger in his welfare. He however added, "I am sorry to say, that I do not feel these things; and what I do not feel, I dare not profess." They soon parted, perhaps to meet no more on earth; but not without a prayer on behalf of the youth, that he might be enabled not only to approve the truth in his judgment, but also to admit it to his heart.

Truth sometimes finds an advocate where we least expect it: who would have thought that this gay, dashing youth would be found urging the perusal of religious tracts, and pleading with a Jew on the fulfilment of prophecy?

How powerful are the appeals of truth to the conscience, even when the heart is not brought under its influence! "Those principles must be important, must be worthy of attention, which can make persons holy and useful in life, and render a death-bed easy," is the admission of many, who, nevertheless, do not yield to them the attention which they deserve. It is an affecting case, when those who think well and speak well of religion, and religious people, and

good books, do not take the only consistent step of becoming themselves truly religious; and it becomes them seriously to press home the question to their hearts, "Why is it?"

How prone is the human heart to ward off self-application! The Jew reads the Talmud, and thinks he is excused from reading the Scriptures. The convinced, but not converted youth shelters himself under the idea that he makes no profession, and therefore religion has no claim—or he cannot feel these things as others do, and he is sorry for it. The reason assigned by our Lord for his rejection by the Jews, will apply with equal force to the unbelief of the one, and the indifference of the other; "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John v. 40; iii. 19.

EVENING IX.



THE PIOUS FAMILY.

A Sketch from Scripture.

AT a very early period of the world idolatry prevailed. Men did not concern themselves about their great Creator, the author of all their blessings; they "did not like" the restraints of his worship and his laws; and, as sin is always of a hardening, blinding tendency, they even forgot what they had learned from their pious ancestors, of his nature and his requirements. They saw that the sun and other heavenly bodies were the most splendid and beautiful objects in nature, and produced most beneficial effects on this lower world; and instead of adoring the one true God, who had made them all, they fell to worshipping the works of his hands, esteeming them as gods. By degrees, even the most contemptible reptiles, and the most odious creatures of their own imaginations, became the objects of their idolatry. Alas! when man once forsakes the source of light and truth, how awful and fatal are his wanderings!

But Jehovah was pleased to preserve the knowledge of himself, even in the darkest times, and to retain some faithful servants amidst the prevailing corruption ; some who should adhere to his worship and service, and rely on the great promise he had given of a future Saviour. For this purpose Abraham was called. He resided with his father Terah, in the land of Ur, in Chaldea. The whole family was addicted to idolatry ; and Abraham was commanded to depart from this wicked and idolatrous place, and to go forth under the direction of God, but without any specific information as to his ultimate abode. This was a great trial of faith and obedience—to leave sufficiency, and to go forth upon an uncertainty ; to leave a settled home, and become a stranger and a sojourner ; to leave the nearest and dearest relations in life, and pass the rest of his days in solitude, or among strangers ; but the command came with such sweet and awful authority, as made Abraham willing to comply, and “he went forth, not knowing whither he went.”

But never was a sacrifice of worldly interest, made in conscientious obedience to the command of God, left without an abundant recompence. An almighty Provider took care that Abraham should never want. He had a much greater portion of worldly goods than he could have expected in his native land : he did not travel or sojourn in solitude, for several of his beloved family were inclined to accompany him. Terah, his father, Sarah, his wife, and Lot, his nephew. His brother Nahor, with his wife Milcah, were

also afterwards induced, by his example, to forsake the idolatrous country in which they lived : and though Abraham was henceforth but a pilgrim dwelling in tents, he had a home wherever he went, for God himself condescended to dwell with him, and to be called his companion and friend ; and, at length, he was removed to an everlasting habitation, "whose builder and maker is God." How often do difficulties disperse as we advance in the way of duty, and encouragements and enjoyments arise which we could never have anticipated ! Many a youth, when called by Divine grace to resign his worldly interests, and his ungodly connexions, has lived to prove, like Abraham, that "godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come ;" and that those beloved friends, among whom he could not stay as an idolater, have been induced, by his holy example, to join him as pilgrims.

It was the intention of God to bestow upon the offspring of Abraham the land of Canaan as a possession ; but Abraham himself was to be only a sojourner in it, frequently changing his abode ; sometimes driven out by famine or other adverse circumstances. But wherever he went, his first care was to "build an altar, and call upon the name of the Lord." "Learn hence, young people, how to begin the world, as you wish to thrive and prosper in it. The house in which no altar is erected to God wants both a foundation and a covering. The house which wants the word and worship of God is not yet

begun to be furnished. Make room for your Maker, and he will settle you in a large place. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all things shall be added thereunto,' Matt. vi. 33." *

It may be interesting to inquire, what this pious practice of Abraham implied, and what particular benefits resulted from it.

1. In the first place, it maintained an avowed difference between Abraham and the idolaters by whom he was surrounded. While some of them were living in utter thoughtlessness, and some falling down to the sun and moon, or to inferior creatures, or to stocks and stones, Abraham built his altar, and called upon the one true God, Jehovah, the possessor of heaven and earth. Perhaps this excited enmity and opposition in some, and in others humble inquiry, and led them also to worship the most high God. Indeed, we have reason to conclude this was the case, and that many well-inclined persons cast in their lot with him, because of the Lord his God. Those who are singularly pious are often made singularly useful; at all events, we must never be ashamed of a profession of vital godliness, even though we may live among those who are strangers and enemies to it.†

* Hunter.

† Persons accustomed to family worship are too apt to think themselves excused from it, when on a journey, or in an unsettled state. The practice of Abraham reproves such an omission.

The following simple anecdote may serve to illustrate the advantage of consistency in this respect:—

A pious man called at an inn in the town where he

2. It may next be regarded as an acknowledgment of Divine direction in all his movements. Whenever Abraham reached a stage in his pilgrimage, he set up his altar, and called upon the name of the Lord, saying, as it were, "Thus far my God has led me on. Hitherto I am brought under his guidance. Here I desire to act as his faithful servant; and here I wait the signal of his hand for my next remove. Never may I take a step but at his bidding. Never may I hesitate to follow where he leads." How happy and how free from care the individual, who thus gives himself up to a guidance that cannot err! How very different was the case of Jonah, the disobedient servant of God, who refused to go where his Master bade him, and chose to follow the dictates of his own perverseness and self-will! He erected no altar; he called not on the name of the Lord; he could not realize with pleasure the presence of the Lord: on the contrary, he attempted to flee from that presence, and even in the moment of imminent danger, seemed stupidly to forget that he had a God on whom to call. There is no greater security against fatal mistakes, than a habit of acknowledging God in all our ways,

resided, to inquire after a gentleman whom he expected to be passing through. The waiter replied, that there was no person in the house answering to the description given; but one of the lowest servants, happening to pass by at the moment, said, "I dare say it is the gentleman who slept in No. 5, that Mr. — is inquiring after, for when I took in his boots, I heard him returning thanks to God for preserving him and his family." Thus is there a difference put, even in the eyes of the world, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

and imploring him to direct our steps; and if once we begin to feel it less delightful than formerly thus to call on the Lord, we may be sure we are going wrong.

3. This pious practice of Abraham was also an acknowledgment that all his worldly prosperity came from God, and a pledge that it should be consecrated to his service. Accordingly, we find one of Abraham's well-taught servants making this devout acknowledgment: "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses," Gen. xxiv. 35. And how entirely Abraham's possessions were consecrated to his God we may judge, when he withheld not his son, his only son, the heir to them all; but was ready to offer him up in sacrifice, at the command of God. It is an unspeakable privilege every day to beg the blessing of God on our lawful endeavours, and to consecrate to his service what is indeed his own. But we cannot really enjoy, nor can we ask the Divine blessing, on any possessions which are obtained by unlawful means, or which are grudgingly withheld from his service.

4. When Abraham set up an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord, he pledged himself to make all his worldly schemes subservient to his religious advantages. No prospect of temporal gain or honour could have induced Abraham to fix in a place, or to hold a situation, where he could not worship and serve his God. Accordingly we find in one of his

removals that he chose to fix his residence at "the place of the altar." His nephew Lot made a different choice. He chose the plains of Sodom, because they were beautiful and well-watered, and regarded not the character of those among whom he fixed his habitation ; and what was the consequence ? His righteous soul was vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked ; his mind was polluted by their odious practices ; his family corrupted ; and all the worldly wealth, obtained at the expense of religious advantages and a good conscience, was in a moment consumed in the destruction of those wicked cities ; while Abraham enjoyed domestic happiness, growing prosperity, a peaceful conscience, and the condescending visits of an approving God.

5. Abraham's domestic worship engaged him to maintain domestic order and discipline. He felt it his duty to instruct his children and servants in the good knowledge of his God, and to set before them a holy and consistent example ; and mark the happy results : he was blessed with beholding piety, both in his offspring and in his dependents. Isaac was a lovely and a dutiful son ; he early feared the God of his father, and delighted in pious retirement and meditation, Gen. xxiv. 63 ; and Eliezer was both a faithful and a pious servant, one who dwelt long in the family, who made his master's interests his own, and earnestly sought of God a blessing on that family, in which, it is likely, he at first learned to seek a blessing for himself, Gen. xxiv. In all probability, many more of Abraham's household were made partakers of

real religion, in consequence of living in a pious family ; what an unspeakable happiness to the head of that family ! To crown all, Abraham was distinguished by the most honourable testimony from God himself. "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," Gen. xviii. 19. What a responsible situation is that of the head of a family ! And what happiness can exceed that of the pious parent who, having trained up his children in the way they should go, sees them rising up in life, and not forsaking it !

6. Abraham's piety influenced his family connexions. When he engaged servants, his eyes were upon the faithful of the land, that they should dwell with him. When he sought a wife for his beloved son Isaac, he resolved, in the fear of God, that one should not be taken from among the idolatrous Canaanites with whom he dwelt ; but sent his trusty servant Eliezer to his kindred in Mesopotamia, to seek a wife for Isaac from among those that feared God. The father, and the son, and the servant, all left it to the Lord their God to appoint the individual ; and so that she were but pious and prudent, none of the parties seemed concerned about riches, honour, personal beauty, or powerful connexions—those matters which worldly policy reckons of the first importance. Abraham would not, on any account, that his son should engage in a marriage, on which he could not conscientiously ask, and believingly expect, the Divine blessing to rest. It never rests on those in which

the honour of God and the interests of the soul are sacrificed to outward accomplishments, or worldly possessions. What an instructive lesson does the conduct of Abraham's family afford, to parents, and children, and servants! The parent who sacrifices his child's real welfare to worldly connexions and interest—the self-willed youth, who, in spite of parental counsels and remonstrances, impetuously exclaims of the vain and ungodly object of his choice, "Get her for me, she pleaseth me well"—the servant who in any way aids an intimacy of which kind and pious parents are ignorant, or which they disapprove—such can never expect the blessing of the God of Abraham to rest upon them.

7. Abraham's household piety engaged him to general and habitual consistency of deportment. A man who professes to worship God, and yet is mean, ungenerous, overbearing, passionate, or revengeful, is guilty of shameful inconsistency, and exposes himself to the reproach of those who most nearly observe him, and see how his practice gives the lie to his profession. In Abraham's character we have many pleasing instances of honourable consistency. How generous, condescending, and peaceable was his spirit, when a separation became necessary between himself and his nephew Lot! "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left," Gen. xiii. 8, 9. How

prompt and courageous his conduct in arming and heading his servants, and rescuing Lot and his family when taken prisoners ! How honourable his disinterestedness and generosity in refusing to receive even a shoe latchet of the spoil ! Gen. xiv. 22, 23. How pleasing his hospitality and politeness in receiving and accommodating strangers ! Gen. xviii. 1—8 ; whereby, indeed, he entertained angels unawares, Heb. xiii. 2. What integrity and liberality marked his transaction with the sons of Heth ! Gen. xxiii. 7—16. He who acts thus consistently, causes the way of truth to be well-spoken of ; and by his good works which men behold, though they may not behold the motive that actuates them, induces observers to glorify his Father which is in heaven.

It must be admitted, that once and again Abraham acted with timidity and dissimulation, unworthy of his character, Gen. xii. 2, 10—13 ; xx. 11—13. The Scriptures never conceal or palliate the failings of the best men, and the best of men are but imperfect. However, it is worthy of remark, that on these two occasions nothing is said of Abraham's first act on his arrival at the place, which was to build an altar, and call upon the name of the Lord. Perhaps he had in some degree slackened in his communion with God, and then he soon yielded to the fear of man, which bringeth a snare. In this he is set, not for our example, but for our warning.

8. Abraham's habitual piety made him familiar with a refuge, a strong-hold in the time of trouble. " He that dwelleth in the secret place

of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation," *Psa. xci.* Such promises as these were abundantly made good in Abraham's experience. God was his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, his all-sufficient portion, his exceeding great reward; strength was granted him equal to his severest trials, and

The mount of danger was the place,
Where he beheld surprising grace.

We are all liable to trouble, to family trouble, losses, and bereavements. How desirable it is to have our refuge and consolation in God! This is not the portion of the individuals or the families that call not on his name.

9. Abraham's habit of pious intercourse with God, gave him great liberty in pleading with God in behalf of others. How affectingly he poured out the fulness of the parental heart! "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" *Gen. xvii. 18.* How gracious the Divine answer! "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him," *ver. 20.* He sought Divine direction and blessing in the enterprise

concerning Isaac's marriage, and the Lord God blessed the servant, and prospered his way. He pleaded for the guilty city of Sodom, and had it contained ten righteous souls, Sodom would have been spared for their sake, and Abraham's intercession. He constantly sought the Divine blessing in his family, and he and his family were blessed, and made blessings; and from him all the families of the earth are to be blessed. It is thus that a godly man is a blessing to his family, to his country, and to the world.

10. It must not be overlooked, that in Abraham's worship he had respect to the great atonement. He not only called upon the name of the Lord, but he builded an altar, and sacrificed thereon, according to the Divine appointment, and with reference to the great Messiah, whose day, by faith, he saw afar off, and was glad, John viii. 56. It is only thus that guilty man can keep up a happy intercourse with his Maker. As we by faith lay hold on the same great sacrifice, our blessings become covenant blessings, we walk with God in delightful acceptance and holy obedience; the good will of Him that visited Abraham rests on our tabernacle, and we may indulge the cheerful hope of ere long sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

VICISSITUDES OF LIFE; OR, THE POSTMAN'S
ROUND.

COMMUNICATED BY AN OCCASIONAL VISITOR.

WE are all apt to fancy ourselves people of importance, and to borrow some degree of consequence from the circumstances and affairs with which we are in any way connected, however remotely or involuntarily. I have heard the lowest porter, or youngest apprentice in an establishment, speak with great pride of "a large order *we* have to execute for his grace the duke of —;" a postillion feels himself greatly honoured—perhaps esteems it a personal compliment, to have put *his* horses to one of the royal carriages for a stage; and a very poor street-sweeper seems to imagine himself possessed of a shadow of royal dignity, from having had the honour of serving seven years aboard the same ship with his late majesty. I confess myself not altogether free from this common vanity; and perhaps my claims to be regarded as a person of consequence may be admitted as superior to those of many others, when I announce myself as the VILLAGE POSTMAN.

Who is there that excites more eager expectation than myself? or who dispenses greater pleasure and pain? But I will invite my readers to accompany me in one of my rounds, and then they will be able to judge for themselves, and to glean instruction, which, after all, is far more important than that my character should be established as a person of consequence.

I knock first at the clergyman's door. The letter is eagerly seized, for the post-mark and the hand-writing intimate that it is from the eldest son, who is at a distance, pursuing his studies, with a view to the Christian ministry. While one of the family is paying the postage, the mother, with trembling eagerness, breaks the seal, and the rest crowd round to know the contents of the letter. A tear of gratitude glistens in her eye as she glances over the contents, and says, "He is quite well." A closer perusal affords enlarged gratification. Every expression of pious solicitude for improvement and usefulness gladdens the parent's heart; and the intimation of the approaching recess, when he hopes to be permitted once more to embrace those most dear to him, sheds lively joy through all the circle.

At the great shop, next door, I generally leave a handful of letters: one, perhaps, contains an extensive order, another gives advice of a large import, by which the markets are lowered, the third announces the failure of a correspondent, and a fourth returns a dishonoured bill. The changing countenance of the tradesman, as he hastily runs over these various communications, seems to say, "Surely man walketh in a vain show; surely he is disquieted in vain; all, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit. Set your affections on things above, not on things that are on earth; and see that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches."

At the corner of a little court I am often met by an anxious widowed mother, who generally accosts me thus:—"What! no letter for my poor girl?" It makes my heart ache to answer, "No letter to-day." Alas! the maiden thinks of one who never thinks of her; and "hope deferred makes the heart sick." Poor Lucy was a pleasing attractive-looking girl, very industrious and well-behaved; she and her mother comfortably supported themselves at dress-making; but in an evil hour Lucy was induced to attend a Christmas merry-making, and there met with a gay captain, quartered in the next town, who, during the remainder of his stay, amused himself by trifling with her feelings, and left her, making promises which he never intended to fulfil. But that which was mere play to the gay trifler, was regarded by the maiden as sober truth. Her affections were really engaged; day after day, and week after week, she flattered herself with hopes and expectations never to be fulfilled. Anxiety has long been preying on her health and spirits, and she takes no interest in her former pursuits; scarcely can she exert herself sufficiently to procure a scanty subsistence; her tender mother watches her wasting fading form with fearful apprehension, still, however, cherishing some lingering hope, that the promised letter may yet arrive, and the gay lover prove not unfaithful. Vain hope! In other towns he has found other maidens to trifle with, and poor Lucy is out of sight, and out of mind. Had she been remembered, little good would such a connexion have brought her: a gay dissipated lover, in what-

ever rank of life he may be found, is sure to work only ruin and misery to the woman with whom he connects himself; and, however deserving that woman may be, if her education and class of society be inferior to his own, she is almost sure of being sooner or later treated with contempt. Poor Lucy! well had it been for her if she could have been content at home, and in the society of sober people of her own rank. And yet, poor thing! she thinks if the captain would fulfil his promises, she would be happy. I think she is greatly mistaken; yet I am grieved always to tell her, "No letter to-day."

Poor frivolous Miss —, when I take her a letter it is from some gay acquaintance, to tell her what places of amusement they have visited, and what new dresses are come in fashion; or to invite her to meet them at some ball-room, or races. Poor empty things! *Such* letters are not worth the postage; and oh to think that such trifles should be made the business of life! Surely they must forget that they are rational creatures; that death is hastening on to them; that they must give an account of the time spent, and the actions done in this life, and spend an eternity in happiness or misery. "O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Serious thoughts of death and eternity would prove an effectual cure for the vanities and frivolities of time.

To a steady little apprentice lad I bring the post-paid letter from his anxious parents, urging him to fidelity and diligence in his master's

service, to avoid the snares of bad company, and to observe the sabbath of the Lord. "And O," say these kind parents, "seek the Lord with all your heart now, in the days of your youth. Life is uncertain, and death may surprise you before the needful work is done. Do not, dear child, rest satisfied with any thing short of an earnest application to the Lord Jesus for life and salvation, and a giving up yourself to Him to be saved in his own way. This is our constant fervent prayer for you, that your youth may be devoted to the service of God. We ask not riches, or honours, or length of days for you, but that you may be made a possessor of the grace of God in truth. Ever be in earnest yourself in prayer; 'seek the Lord, and he will be found of you.'" The youth retires to receive in secret the instructions of his father, and the appeals of his mother. And may it be to seek the God of his parents in sincerity and truth !

It is for want of such advice having being acted upon, that I have to convey to the parents of another youth the painful intelligence of their son's misconduct. He has been disobedient, negligent, and insolent, if not absolutely unfaithful, and his master threatens him with punishment and disgrace. Alas ! that a well-instructed youth should thus blast his own character and interests, and inflict pain on his tender parents. "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him." Such grief and bitterness has this thoughtless youth inflicted on kind, but perhaps too indulgent parents. It is

not the first letter of the same kind that has been sent; and every time I call, I observe that the poor mother, in particular, looks more and more pale and care-worn. It would be no great matter of surprise, if this wicked youth should bring down the grey hairs of his parents with sorrow to the grave.

Very different are the feelings which my visit excites in another family, to whom I convey a letter from a child at a distance, modestly expressing his humble hope, that the Divine blessing has sent home to his heart the many instructions of pious parents, and has answered their fervent prayers on his behalf. He has seen and felt himself a sinner: he has resolved, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." He has been directed to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; and it is his earnest desire that Divine grace may enable him to devote his future life to the service of the Redeemer. Happy parents! whose hopes are thus confirmed, and their warmest wishes gratified. "A wise son maketh a glad father." Dear youth, thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice when "thy lips speak right things;" and many a fervent prayer shall still ascend, that thy path may be as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

"How near is bliss to grief allied!" To one house I had to convey two letters: the one of rich gilt-edged paper, sealed with a fanciful and pleasing device; the other, bearing the same

post-mark, but with a broad black border, and large black seal: the one announcing to the family the marriage of an interesting young couple, nearly related to them, and their intention of visiting them on their wedding tour; the other, written a few hours later, and requesting that on the arrival of the newly married pair, the painful intelligence might be broken to them, that the young lady's mother, who had breakfasted with them in perfect health, just after their departure had suddenly expired. Severe as the shock must have been, it was delightfully alleviated by the assurance, that their departed friend had long walked with God, and was now translated to heaven, where she would see God.

I proceeded with my bag, and gladdened the heart of a poor old widow with a letter, bearing the foreign post-mark. It came from her only son, a sailor, and brought her from the other side of the Atlantic his grateful and dutiful expressions of affection, and a portion of his savings, to contribute to the comfort of his far-distant, but not forgotten mother. Poor old creature, she scarcely looked at the enclosure, but wept for joy at the tidings of her child's welfare, the expressions of his affection, and the intimation of his once more visiting his native land, and embracing his beloved parent. Ah! there is no love like that between a mother and a child.

I will mention but one call more; and that was at the great house. Late the night before, an express had come down from London to an-

nounce the birth of a son and heir, and the bells were still ringing, and the people in the house carousing in celebration of the joyful event; but the letter I presented soon changed the scene, by announcing the death of both mother and child, which took place a few hours after the messenger had been despatched. Ah! how vain are all things here below! How affectingly are the warnings of Scripture thus enforced:—"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." Happy are they, and they only, who can say, "Thou art my portion, O Lord;" and who "shall not be afraid of evil tidings," having their hearts fixed, trusting in God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," O God, "whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." "Here we have no continuing city," no abiding relation; but we may well endure all the changes of earth and time, if we can look upward, and feel a well-founded confidence that God is our reconciled Father, in Christ Jesus, and heaven our everlasting home.

ON WALKING CIRCUMSPECTLY.

THE late Rev. Matthew Wilks, wishing to illustrate the apostle's exhortation, Ephes. v. 15, referred to the manner in which a cat passes along

a row of ridge-tiles stuck with broken glass, and recommended his friends to imitate her caution. The late slippery weather has afforded many useful hints in this respect. Many individuals fell, because they did not observe that the boys had been making a slide. We ought to observe and look well to our ways, and carefully avoid those paths where Satan or worldly companions have laid snares for our feet. "I can walk in pattens," said one; "I am not at all afraid;" and almost immediately the rashness was re-proved by a dangerous stumble. That which elevates often endangers; and "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." The snow on the ground deadened the sound of carriages, and others narrowly escaped severe injury from the approach of a carriage before they were aware. We must not only look to our own path, but be on our guard against sudden assaults that may attack us in it. "Lay hold on me and fear nothing," said one companion to another; but very shortly both fell. We cannot place implicit dependence on our best earthly friends. Those of whom we have formed the highest opinion, if once they rely on their own strength, are liable to fall themselves, and to mislead their friends.

"You had better not venture out at night," was sober counsel, rejected by a youth who thought he knew every step of the way in the dark as well as the light; but the snow concealed the path, and he wandered to the brink of a river. He who despises counsel is walking in a dangerous way; and he who rashly runs in

the way of danger and temptation has no reason to expect that he will be delivered from evil.

Circumspection may degenerate to timidity, and cause an individual unnecessarily to protract his journey to the loss of his time, the injury of his health, and the benumbing of his energies. Such instances have recently occurred. He who would pass through the dangers of life with circumspection and safety, must learn to harmonize and act upon the following texts:—

“The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” Jer. x. 23. “Happy is the man that feareth alway,” Prov. xxviii. 14. “Be not high-minded, but fear,” Rom. xi. 20. “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely,” Prov. x. 9. “The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble,” Prov. iv. 19. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,” Prov. xiii. 20. “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil;” Prov. iv. 25—27. “Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,” Heb. xii. 1. “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered,” Prov. xxviii. 26. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths,” Prov. iii. 5, 6. “The Lord thy God will hold

thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee," Isa. xli. 13. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

PIETY AND CONSISTENCY.

A DAY labourer, accustomed to buy his clothes of a godly tradesman, requested the squire on whose grounds he worked to give him an hour, that he might go to the shop, and buy some apparel he wanted. Upon which the gentleman said, "Why cannot you go on Sunday?" The honest countryman replied, "Sir, the man does not sell on Sundays." "Then why," said the squire, "cannot you go to some who will sell?" "Why, sir," said the poor man, "I cannot buy so cheap* any where else."

It is sad that a squire should be found so ignorant as not to know, or so wicked as not to obey, the command of God, which enjoins the observance of the sabbath as a day of holy rest; not only for masters and mistresses, but for their men-servants and their maid-servants. And such ignorance and irreligion are best reprov'd by an appeal to the moral conduct of those who regard the sabbath, and who, if consistent, will always be found the most upright and agreeable in the common transactions of life. Thus even

* "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 26. In addition to this, it is evident that the pious man was an honest man, and one that gave money's worth for money.

men of the world discern a difference "between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." The same sentiment is exemplified in the following facts.

Some time since the writer called on a young person who once resided in her own family. On inquiring of her as to her present situation, she replied that she had occupied it about six years; that she suffered some privations, which she exceedingly lamented, especially the want of family prayer; but she added, the heads of the family were very kind to her, and treated her with the utmost confidence, allowing her to impart to the children committed to her care such instruction, and to purchase for their use such books, as she thought proper: and she had great reason to hope, that, under the Divine blessing, her efforts on their behalf had not been in vain.

Shortly afterwards another dear friend mentioned to the writer, that her daughter was placed in a very responsible situation, having several children entirely committed to her care, whose parents were quite destitute of religion. Such, however, was their opinion of religious people, that they would not engage any others in their service if such were to be had, especially in the higher departments, where greater trust was involved, or more personal intercourse with the family. How pleasing are such facts! How honourable to religion is the testimony of worldly people who find they can be best served by the pious. What blessed results may we not

hope for, from the admission of consistent Christians into such families, that they may prove, according to the beautiful similies of our blessed Lord, like the salt to preserve the whole from corruption; or like the leaven, gradually, yet effectually, to pervade the whole mass. On the other hand, it is most deeply to be deplored, that some professing Christians give occasion to those who are themselves ignorant of religion to judge unfavourably of it. What can be more unsuitable and painful than to hear it said, "Such a man, to be sure, makes more talk about religion than his neighbours; but what is he really the better? He can give short weight, or short measure; or send home goods different from the sample; or fail in the performance of a contract; or in some way or other overreach those with whom he has dealings! I will never deal with a religious tradesman.—Such a servant talks much about her religious privileges; but she is as selfish, as indolent, or as artful as those who make no ado about religion! I will never have a religious servant." These things are said; alas for those of whom they are justly said!

Let it be the constant concern of every professor of religion, that his conduct may never give occasion to any to speak evil of the way of truth; but, on the other hand, let him leave a testimony in the bosoms of those who observe him, that there is such a thing as real piety, and that it produces whatsoever things are just, pure, honest, lovely, and of good report, Phil. iv. 8.

THE OPPOSER CONVINCED ; OR, A BAD RESOLUTION HAPPILY BROKEN.

A CERTAIN couple in London lived several years in great domestic harmony and comfort ; but, alas, it was in forgetfulness of God. At length it pleased Almighty mercy to bring home to the heart of the female a sense of her situation as a sinner, and her need of a Saviour. When a concern about her immortal interests was awakened, she naturally felt anxious to attend the preaching of the gospel, which she had happily found to be "the power of God unto salvation." It will not be imagined by those who know any thing of the gospel and its proper effects, that she became less kind and affectionate towards the partner of her life, or less diligent in the discharge of her domestic duties. Nor could her husband charge her with deficiency in these important respects : yet he was exceedingly displeased at her having become religious. It seems very strange that people who are not pious themselves should be displeased at their friends and relations becoming so ; and it would indeed be perfectly unaccountable, if the Scripture had not told us that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and consequently against godliness, by which men seek to do the will of God. However, so it has been seen in multitudes of instances, and so it was in the present case. Though Mary's religion made her a vast deal happier than she was before, and, even on John's showing, none the worse,

John was violently opposed to it, and after having tried in vain to persuade her to relinquish it, he at last resolved to take the upper hand, and insisted that she should go no more to hear the gospel. Accordingly, one Lord's day evening, he said to her, "Now, Mary, I am resolved, once for all, that you shall go no more to chapel. You and I have lived together happily for several years, and if we are to live happily together any longer, this religion must be given up. If ever you go to chapel again, that moment I shall leave the house, and never enter it more. Now, you know what you have to trust to, and a week to consider of it."

Poor Mary wept bitterly, and expostulated with her husband, but in vain. He declared that nothing should alter his purpose. During the week, Mary prayed earnestly that she might be directed what course to pursue, and that the heart of her dear husband might be softened ; but no allusion was made to the subject between themselves. At length, she resolved so far to meet his wishes as to remain at home on the sabbath morning, and prepare a comfortable dinner for him, hoping that he might then relent, and permit her to go in the afternoon ; but resolving, if he did not, to go at all hazards, and leave her cause in the hands of that God whose will she desired to obey. Accordingly, after partaking of dinner together, during which meal much kindness was expressed, she cleared away the things, dressed herself, and with a trembling step prepared to go out. "Mary !" said her husband, with a stern voice, "where are you

going?" "To chapel," she replied. "What, have you forgotten all that I said to you this day week? or do you think you can live happy without me?" "My dear husband," replied Mary, "I have not forgotten; nor can I live happily without you, whom I most dearly and faithfully love: but I must obey God rather than man, and leave it in His hands to change your determination, or to support me under the trial." "Well, then, here we part; you will not find me when you return—you will never see me more."

When service was over, poor Mary hastened home, and found the house deserted. Agitated and heart-broken she threw herself on the ground, and poured forth the anguish of her heart before God. It was a case in which she felt no inclination to seek human sympathy; she remained alone the whole evening, agonized, yet not hopeless. Between nine and ten o'clock a gentle tap was heard at the door. Mary opened it with a trembling hand. It was her husband! He threw himself into her arms, and implored her forgiveness. Poor Mary's heart was too much overwhelmed with joy to admit the thought of forgiveness being necessary; she welcomed the wanderer home, and asked no questions. At length, however, unasked, he told her, that having taken his clothes, and left home, with a full determination never to return to it, he wandered along the streets, not knowing where to go, or how to dispose of himself. At length it occurred to him, he would wait in a court by which she must pass on her return

home, where he could, unobserved, take one more look at her with whom he had spent so many happy days. As he stood there, he heard the voice of singing; it was in a place of worship. He dropped in to pass the time; but he heard what arrested his attention, and found its way to his heart. "Ah," he thought, "if Mary felt as I feel, no wonder she could not stay away: how could I be such a wretch as to hinder her!" When he quitted the place, he found that she must already have gone home. He followed her, but shame and remorse overpowered him; he could not take courage to enter. He continued to pace the streets in an agony of mind not inferior to her own, and several hours passed before he could prevail on himself to meet his injured wife. The feelings of both may be better imagined than described; for the first time they knelt together, and implored mercy of Him who is able to save to the uttermost. Henceforth they hastened together to the house of prayer and praise; they took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company.

In course of time both became, and happily continued, honourable members of a Christian church. This statement may be relied on, having been communicated by the minister of the parties, who had the happiness of witnessing their consistent deportment.*

* The late Rev. Thomas Waters, of Worcester, formerly of London.

EVENING X.



THE FAMILY OF ISAAC.

A Sketch from Scripture.

THE history of Isaac's family, though marked by fewer changes than those of his progenitor or his descendants, yet affords many instructive hints of character, and many striking instances of the wisdom, faithfulness, and goodness of God in his dealings with his people. Both Isaac and his wife were distinguished in early life for qualities most amiable in youth, and which promise well for usefulness and happiness in future years and new connexions.

Isaac was a dutiful and affectionate son. Though he was his father's delight, "tender and only beloved in the sight of his mother," treated no doubt with fond indulgence, and brought up with splendid expectations, yet we find in him none of that folly and effeminacy, none of that forwardness, self-sufficiency, and impatience of parental control, by which too many young persons disgrace themselves. When Abraham was called upon to sacrifice his

beloved son, that son was of an age to have resisted; but he meekly yielded to the command of Heaven, and thereby discovered submission and faith, not inferior to those of his father; and this living sacrifice, this reasonable service was, in both, holy, acceptable unto God, and honoured with his especial blessing. Too often young men who submit to the authority of a father, treat with most indelicate disrespect the feelings and the wishes of a mother. This was not the case with Isaac. She, from whom he had experienced maternal tenderness, met her reward in his filial duty and affection; he treated her through life with respectful tenderness, and cherished her memory with lasting reverence.

How common is it for young persons to form the most intimate attachments, involving their interests for time, and even for eternity, in total disregard, if not in direct opposition, to parental counsel. So did not Isaac. Aware of his father's affectionate and pious solicitude for his real welfare, he was inclined to leave the suggestion and management of this important matter to him, rather than run the hazard, by an imprudent step of his own, of embittering family connexions, and sacrificing family religion. Once more: how apt are young people to dislike the religious observances and restrictions of their father's house: how apt to think their pious parents very good and well-meaning, but needlessly strict and over zealous! Isaac not only cheerfully conformed to the domestic order of the pious family, but at an early period of life chose the God of his father to be his God,

and retired to hold sacred communion with him. Happy the youth who loves retirement, that he may hold converse with his own heart, and with his God. He is accumulating strength and wisdom to meet the various cares and trials of earth, and he is anticipating the glories and delights of heaven. Isaac's early conduct was such as fairly indicated that he would, in due time, be a good husband, a good father, a good master, a good neighbour; and perhaps there is no safer rule by which to judge, in the choice of a partner for life, than the conduct of the party in earlier relations. The turbulent, self-willed youth, regardless of his parents' wishes and comforts, can never be expected to prove a steadily tender and affectionate husband: nor is the pert, random, self-conceited girl at all likely to become a faithful, obedient, and devoted wife. Many young persons have relied for happiness on personal fondness, and have lived in wretchedness, to prove that transient fondness is a very different thing from steady well-principled affection and duty.

Rebekah, the destined bride of Isaac, though beautiful and wealthy, was not above the humble, useful employments of domestic life. She was the wife that God had appointed for Isaac; and though Abraham's servant was sent without special directions to any individual, it is evident she was the kind of person desired by the family. When the servant rested at the well's mouth, and implored Divine direction and success in his enterprise, he ventured to propose a sign by which he should know the appointed individual.

It was not an arbitrary sign ; but indicated that a suitable object should unite in her character the virtues of industry, humility, and affability. It was as if he had said, " May the woman whom God has appointed be humble, industrious, and obliging, and may his appointment be clearly marked." It pleased God to crown his faith, and to grant his request. Rebekah appeared, not indolently reclining on a couch of state ; not attended by a train of servants to anticipate her wishes, and spare her the exertion of acting or thinking ; not splendidly dressed, and running in pursuit of pleasure and dissipation, but bearing her pitcher on her shoulder to the well, to draw the evening supply of water for the family. The servant, according to his proposed sign, requested a draught of water from her pitcher. In the most condescending, courteous, and obliging manner, she instantly complied with his request, and extended her kindness and humanity even to the brute creatures that accompanied him : " Drink," said she, " and I will give thy camels drink also." And did she thus degrade herself, and hinder her promotion in life ? Quite the reverse. Her civility to the servant, and her tenderness to the camels, were the very signs that marked her as the individual who should become their mistress, and who should be a prudent, kind, and considerate mistress.

Rebekah discovered an amiable frankness in the interesting circumstances in which she was now placed ; and indeed we may fairly conclude that her willingness to accompany the servant to

the family of Abraham, arose, in a great measure, from the high opinion she had formed of the prevalence of piety in that family. Her subsequent conduct proves that there was no deficiency of female modesty and delicacy; for when she approached her destined lord, she alighted off the camel, and took a veil and covered herself. Isaac, according to his pious custom, had gone forth to meditate or pray, when he met his intended bride. Happy is that courtship which, like this, is begun, conducted, and concluded with prayer; in which Divine direction is asked at every step, Divine strength implored for every duty, and a Divine blessing sought to cement every connexion, and crown every enjoyment.

Rebekah was accompanied by a faithful nurse, one who had probably been her attendant in childhood, and who would still take a tender interest in her comfort and welfare. The name of this nurse was Deborah; we hear no more of her until we are informed of her death many years afterwards. She appears to have survived her mistress, and to have continued her affectionate and faithful services to her children; for she was honourably buried and greatly lamented by the family of Jacob. The oak under which her remains were deposited, was called *Allonbachuth*, or "the oak of weeping;" an honourable memorial of grateful respect to the memory of a conscientious and faithful servant. Much of the happiness of families depends on the conduct of servants. The character of a good servant is truly honourable, both in the sight of God and

good men ; and it is generally in the power of servants to command the respect, the gratitude, and the liberality of those they serve.

Isaac, whose tears for the loss of his beloved mother had scarcely ceased to flow at the time of his marriage, brought Rebekah into Sarah's tent, and loved her, and was comforted. What a pleasing union of filial and conjugal tenderness ! and how mercifully is the providence of God seen in setting a day of prosperity over against a day of adversity, and healing in new relations the wounds inflicted in dissolving former ones !

Unmingled felicity is never allotted to man. Isaac and Rebekah were most happy in each other, but the blessing of children was long withheld. In most cases this is a trial ; but it was pre-eminently so in that family which had received the promise of being blessed, and made blessings to the whole earth. However it was a trial of faith ; if they believed Him faithful who had promised, they might safely leave in his hands the fulfilment of his own word. It was well that no crooked policy was resorted to, to hasten the accomplishment of the promise. It was well that no unkindness or estrangement arose between Isaac and Rebekah, and well that they carried their grievance to Him who alone could remedy it. After waiting twenty years their prayers were granted, and Rebekah became the mother of twins. Some peculiar circumstances awakened the anxiety of the parents, which, like other trials, led them to "inquire of the Lord," when some remarkable intimations

were given of the future destiny of the children. As they grew up, a marked difference was discovered in their dispositions and pursuits. Esau, of a bold adventurous disposition, took great delight in hunting; but Jacob, like his father, preferred the quiet, retired life of a shepherd.

We have seen in the parents much that was amiable and excellent; but no man can be pronounced complete, till he has been tried in every situation. New connexions and new circumstances, often bring to light unsuspected weaknesses of character. It was thus in the family of Isaac. Each parent most unwarrantably adopted a favourite child; and this small family—for they had but two children—was in consequence thrown into perpetual altercation. Esau was the favourite child of Isaac, and Jacob of Rebekah. With regret we observe, that Isaac's partiality arose from a very weak and unworthy motive. He loved his son, because he did eat of his venison. How humbling to human nature, that a wise and pious man like Isaac, should thus be brought into subjection to a mere animal appetite. For Rebekah's partiality, a better motive may be assigned; but the results were far more greatly criminal, and her example stands as a warning to us, not to do evil that good may come. A Divine intimation had been given, that the younger son should attain the precedence; in consequence of this, it is probable that Rebekah desired that Jacob should be regarded as the first-born, and distinguished him by her partial favour accordingly. A competition for the precedency and rights of

primogeniture commenced very early between the children, and inflamed their minds to continual jealousies and bickerings; each parent, it would appear, supporting the claims of the respective darling. It is evident that Isaac was wrong in opposing the Divine intimations; and Rebekah was wrong in interposing her unjust partiality and crooked policy, to promote her ends. The commands of God, not his purposes, are to be the rule of our conduct; and the mistakes of both parents stand as a warning to parents in general against indulging a partiality, by which they almost infallibly lose the love of one child, the respect of another, and sow the seeds of strife and ill-will in their family, which will perhaps long survive the unjust and foolish partiality in which it originated. Concerning the birthright, the following observations should be borne in mind:—It was attached to seniority. It consisted in superiority of dignity and power, and a double portion of the family estate. It included also the duty and honour of being priest in the family, in case of the father's absence. On several occasions, the right was forfeited by misconduct, and the privileges passed on to a younger son. In the family of Abraham, a peculiar blessing was promised, having respect to the Messiah. This was generally supposed to be annexed to the birthright; though, in several instances, it pleased God to convey it otherwise. These particulars help us to understand what was the object particularly coveted in the privilege of being the first-born. A worldly man desired the wealth, honour, dig-

nity, and power; a godly man desired the spiritual privileges, especially the honour of being in the line whence He should spring, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Esau was of the former class. He despised the spiritual privileges; but eagerly coveted those that were temporal. Jacob was accustomed to habits of simplicity and moderation; he was content with little, and does not appear to have been at all anxious to possess worldly wealth and dignity. Yet we cannot suppose him to have been wholly influenced by spiritual motives, in desiring the birthright, or he could not have resorted to unworthy measures, in order to obtain it. Perhaps in early youth, it was coveted more as being the family bone of contention, than from a just appreciation of its real value. This is often the case, and serves to expose the folly of parents in encouraging disputes among their children, whether in matters of the smallest or of the greatest importance.

While the peace of the family was thus sacrificed to intestine broils, trials of an external kind visited them. There was a grievous famine in the land, and they were driven from home to seek shelter and subsistence in Gerar, one of the cities of Palestine. Isaac had great possessions, and yet was driven to this necessity. There are many evils which wealth cannot meet. Hence we are taught its insufficiency, and the folly of relying on it, as well as the wisdom of contentment with the allotments of Providence, whatever they may be. There are many circumstances in which the skill, the ingenuity, the

hardihood of the labourer are far more valuable than the wealth of the rich man ; for instance, when shipwrecked on an uncultivated land. It is wise, while surrounded with plenty, to accustom ourselves to habits of moderation, that if seasons of privation should await us, we may not be rendered miserable. During the sojourn of the family in the land of the Philistines, occasions arose of calling forth the peculiar dispositions of its members. In some instances, we see Isaac's character to great advantage, as a man of peace submitting to injury, rather than contending or resenting.

In eastern countries, water is peculiarly valuable, especially to those who possess much cattle. Such was the case with Isaac ; and having amicably settled in the land, he resorted to the wells of water opened many years before by his father Abraham. But the proud and selfish Philistines envied his prosperity, and maliciously stopped up the wells on which the sustenance of his cattle depended. Again and again he chose rather to relinquish a just right than to support it by force, and retired, seeking relief in patience and industry. At length he conquered by yielding ; and having relinquished the wells called Esek, "contention," and Sitnah, "hatred," he found himself in quiet possession of Rehoboth, or "room." Happy is he who is thus enabled by generosity and peaceableness to weary out the opposition of selfishness and injustice, and to achieve a victory at once certain, honourable, and satisfactory. Isaac appears also to advantage as a pious man. We find him imitating

the example of his father, in "building an altar, and calling on the name of the Lord." It is well to keep up good practices from generation to generation. When the children of pious parents set up housekeeping, they should surely resolve, "Our parents had an altar in their house, and *we cannot do without one.*"

We regret to observe, that Isaac through timidity and distrust of God, who had engaged to protect him and his family, fell into the same meanness of which his father had been guilty, in disavowing his wife, lest her beauty should involve him in danger. Such distrust and dissimulation were altogether unworthy of a good man, and the keenest reproof was inflicted in the frankness and generosity manifested by those whom he had so groundlessly suspected. It is sad, when men of the world, who are strangers to the fear of God, act better from motives of common honesty and generosity, than those who profess to be actuated by higher principles.

The sons of Isaac were growing towards manhood, when the turbulent and headstrong disposition of Esau led him into a transaction that greatly affected the whole of his future years. He came in hungry from hunting, and finding his brother preparing a pottage of herbs, most vehemently desired it. Jacob, it appears, took an unjustifiable advantage of his brother's hunger, and made the pottage the price of the desired birthright. Eager to satisfy the momentary gratification, and holding in contempt the spiritual privileges of the birthright, Esau consented to the unwise bargain ; perhaps thinking

little more of it than as a childish joke. Alas ! how many imitate his example, and barter their souls, their everlasting welfare, for the indulgence of some base and sordid lust, or treat their eternal interests as a trifle, not worth a thought. Considerable time elapses before we hear again of the family of Isaac. Its peace was then again interrupted by the folly and misconduct of Esau, who in total disregard of parental feelings, of domestic happiness, and of religious interests, married two idolatrous wives. No wonder that this ungrateful disorderly conduct of their elder son, was a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah. Surely parents, who have toiled and cared for the support and education of their children, and whose life is, as it were, bound up in their life and welfare, ought to be consulted in a connexion involving so much ; and the youth who follows the impulse of a blind passion, and brings into the family a trouble and grief of mind to his parents, may rest assured, that he is laying up a treasure of misery for himself, which will surely be unlocked at some time or other.

At somewhat more than a hundred years of age, Isaac was visited with blindness. How do the infirmities of old age, in the comparatively few who attain that period, urge upon the young to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, before those days draw on, of which it may be truly said, there is no pleasure or energy in them ! Happy the youth who lays up a store in his mind, of which neither the blindness, nor deafness, nor feebleness of age, can deprive him. Isaac had such a resource, for he communed

with God in his youth. His infirmity, however, exposed him to a cruel deception, in which we regret to find those concerned, who ought most tenderly and vigilantly to have guarded him against imposition, and promoted his enjoyments. Notwithstanding the misconduct of Esau, and overlooking or forgetting—we would fain hope not resisting—the Divine intimations respecting Jacob, Isaac prepared to confer the blessing of the firstborn on his elder son; but by the crafty management of Rebekah, in which Jacob too readily concurred, Isaac was deluded into a belief that Esau stood before him, and he pronounced on Jacob the prophetic benediction. What a mysterious affair! It was just that Esau should lose the blessing, for he had despised and sold it. It was God's design that Jacob should inherit it; but the conduct both of Rebekah and Jacob was most criminal, and yet success attended the enterprise. Let us learn, then, that success does not always stamp a measure as good; the purposes of God are often brought about by means of the errors and sins of men; but never, never justify them. God cannot tempt any man to evil. Besides, notwithstanding the success that sometimes attends unhallowed projects and unjustifiable means, guilt brings its own punishment. A consciousness of the means employed serves to embitter the success obtained, and very often a scourge arises from those means, or that success which strikingly marks the retributive justice of God. Rebekah obtained the desired honour, for her darling son Jacob received the blessing; but

both must have sunk greatly in the esteem of Isaac ; they provoked the bitter enmity of Esau ; immediately this erring mother and son were separated, and it appears, never met again on earth. Had Rebekah and Jacob affectionately reminded Isaac of the Divine oracle, and committed their cause to Him who could influence his heart, the whole affair might, in all probability, have been brought about without incurring guilt, and entailing family discord and separation ; at all events, it was their duty to have made the attempt. While we adore the mercy of God, in overruling the folly and guilt of men, let us be warned never to do evil, that good may come.

Esau no sooner found that he had been overreached, than he burst into an exceeding vehement and bitter cry. Still, however, it is evident, that his distress arose not from the loss of the birthright in its spiritual advantages, but in the temporal honours and advantages connected with it. Too often religion itself is despised, while the advantages which accompany it are eagerly desired ; and often those who have made light of religion, bewail their folly when it is too late. A blessing was conferred upon Esau, but it was not *the* blessing. Nor did Esau in his heart desire that, though he envied and hated Jacob for obtaining it. Esau became wealthy and mighty, but not pious. He cherished in his heart the most rancorous and murderous projects against his brother, which, however, he was prevented from putting into execution. Jacob, as already intimated, fled from his rage, and abode in Haran for twenty years. This,

therefore, may be regarded as the breaking up of the family. In closing this sketch, we cannot help remarking, that though Isaac was a man of peace, he was embroiled in frequent contentions. Circumstances are not under our own control; and the trials sent us are often, it might be said generally, such as touch our peculiar constitution and disposition. This is wisely ordered, that they may prove trials indeed.

Isaac, though a pious and prosperous man, was exposed to many changes. These things are necessary to convince the most favoured, that earth is not their rest. Isaac had a long dark night towards the close of his mortal career. What a blessing that he had an eye of faith to look into eternal glories! What a mercy to have hopes and consolations, of which no trials could deprive him; which could support him in the hour of dissolution, and enable him to triumph over the grave! May we be followers of those, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises, and sit down at last with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God!

PUNCTUALITY.

“METHOD,” as Mrs. More says, “is the hinge of business, and there is no method without punctuality.” Punctuality is important, because it subverts the peace and good-temper of a family; the want of it not only infringes on necessary duty, but sometimes excludes the duty.

Punctuality is important as it gains time: it is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one: the calmness of mind which it produces, is another advantage of punctuality: a disorderly man is always in a hurry, he has no time to speak with you, because he is going elsewhere; and when he gets there, he is too late for his business, or he must hurry away to another before he can finish it. It was a wise maxim of the Duke of Newcastle, "I do one thing at a time." Punctuality gives weight to character. Such a man has made an appointment, then I know he will keep it; and this generates punctuality in you; for, like other virtues, it propagates itself. Servants and children must be punctual where there leader is so. Appointments indeed become debts: I owe you punctuality if I have made an appointment with you, and have no right to throw away your time, if I do my own.

CECIL.

THE IRREGULAR FAMILY.

MR. G— was, for a short time, one of the most flourishing cutlers at the west end of the town. Having obtained general repute for ingenuity and industry, he had plenty of custom, and was enabled to employ several journeymen and apprentices, both among the most respectable of their class. The former were either acknowledged good workmen when he admitted them to his service, or such as discovered a readiness to improve themselves, by adopting his

superior methods ; and for the latter, whenever he had a vacancy, several families were desirous of placing their sons, with a premium, in the house of so skilful a workman, and so prosperous a tradesman. It was also generally admitted, that Mr. G— was a man of a kind and liberal disposition, and his wife “was one of the best-tempered women in the world.” In addition to all this, the family was reputed to be religious. The shop was close shut on Sundays, and both public and family worship attended. It might fairly be concluded, that this was a comfortable and desirable situation in which to place a youth ; and that this must be a flourishing and happy family. But it was long since observed by the wisest of men, that one dead fly could taint a whole vessel of precious ointment ; and so, one bad quality or bad habit, suffered to prevail, has often been known to eat out individual excellence and family harmony. The wife and mistress is generally regarded as the main spring in the internal arrangements of a family, and to her is assigned the quiet praise, when all things are done decently and in order ; hers, too, is generally the undivided blame of a slatternly house, and ill-managed family. Her influence is, no doubt, very considerable ; but, perhaps, due allowance is not always made for the ill-proportioned and ponderous weight which often clogs this main spring in her orderly movements ; even the determined irregularity of some, over whom she has no authority, and which all her gentle silent influence, and her constant redoubled exertions, are insufficient to counteract.

This, however, was not the case in Mr. G—'s family. Its irregularity—for irregularity was its distinguished and its ruinous feature—might be traced, in some degree, to both its heads; but the principal blame certainly rested with the wife. Mr. G—, it has been observed, was an excellent workman. Whenever he gave his mind to the construction of any instrument, it was sure to be most ingeniously contrived, most accurately adjusted, and most nicely finished. He was also remarkably quick in accomplishing his work. He so well understood what he was about, and moved with such activity, that he could generally accomplish in two days a task that would occupy most men a week. He *could* do so—but did he? Not always; for too often he suffered himself to be drawn aside from his regular employ by some ingenious speculation, or curious experiment, and relied on his extraordinary quickness, to bring up his neglected arrears, and fulfil the orders of his customers; and *sometimes* he certainly succeeded to admiration. His experiment resulted in something worth knowing. His ingeniously constructed bauble, perhaps, caught the attention of some rich young nobleman, and sold for more than he could have earned at his regular work. Having trifled almost to the last hour, he then set to with surprising energy, worked day and night, and just in time accomplished an extensive order for a gentleman going out to India. These few extraordinary instances of unmerited success served to talk about for many years, and to justify many a deviation from the

steady course of duty, and to overshadow many a glaring instance in which similar conduct led to very different results. Now, had Mr. G— been blessed with a wife, whose influence, and whose example would have kept in his view the lovely superiority of steady, persevering diligence, to sudden freaks and starts of activity; and of efforts well-directed and well-regulated, beyond mere feats of ingenuity and skill, for the purpose of saying and displaying what might be done—it is not improbable that he would have cultivated those habits of punctuality and steadiness so necessary to secure to a tradesman permanent respectability of character, and to retain the confidence and approbation of his customers. His business would then have been attended to, and finished in a regular and satisfactory manner; and sufficient leisure might have remained for occasional pursuits. But he had by no means, in this respect, a help meet for him. With much in each that was estimable and amiable, and with a warm attachment for each other, this couple were not well matched. Their habits and dispositions formed no counterpoise to each other, their failings were of the same class, and were strengthened by association. At first each made excuses for, and encouraged the other in procrastination and irregularity; and after awhile each upbraided the other, as the cause of the domestic discomfort which those evil habits never fail to produce.

In early life Mr. G— had accustomed himself frequently, though not constantly, to rise very early, and to apply himself closely to his work,

especially any particular work, in which attention or despatch was necessary; but, then, an active old woman kept his house, who was herself an early riser, and who took care to have his breakfast ready as early as he could desire it. Mrs. G— was not an early riser: her servants soon found this out, and made it a plea for indulging their own indolence. It was of no use, they said, to get up early, for mistress would not be about: besides, they added, there was no encouragement to do it; for if they got up ever so early, they could not have their breakfast till nine or ten o'clock. In consequence of all this, the house was often shut in a morning when it ought to have been open; and the men and boys were ringing and waiting, and no one was up to let them in. In time, they too took the hint, and came a little and a little later, until, at length, their master was regularly deprived of several hours' work in a week, for which he had to pay. Besides, the master himself gradually sunk into the same bad habit; and his business suffered severely, from the loss both of his eyes and his hands. The shop, instead of being the first opened in the street, was generally the last; and instead of some particular work being accomplished in the early quietness of the morning, and tied up in readiness, against the purchaser should call for it, it was to be hastily done, amidst the bustle and interruption of a busy day; perhaps, while the customer was waiting for it, after having been several times promised and disappointed. Thus each new day was burdened with the neglected duties of its predecessors; and

more and more hopeless became the task of wearing down these arrears. Work was undertaken, then laid aside, and forgotten; the customers wearied out and offended; and, at length, the shop comparatively deserted.

It was stated that Mr. G— commenced house-keeping with the observance of family worship; but the indulgence of late hours in the morning proved a mortal enemy to punctuality in this important respect. Being delayed to an inconveniently late season, it was next to impossible to collect all the members of the family together; the children were *obliged* to go to school, and the apprentices were *obliged* to go into the shop, and interruptions of one kind or other were sure to beset those who assembled; the duty was attended to in a heartless and irregular manner, and, at length, sunk into disuse, with the too common apology, "It is impossible for people in business to assemble for family worship in the morning." Thus, then, a professedly Christian family assembled round their morning meal, and went forth to the business of the day like a set of heathens,* and almost like a set of brutes; the younger children in their night clothes, or with faces unwashed, and hair uncombed, squalid, feverish, and fretful. All was clamour and bustle; the elder children driven off to school without due preparation, and at a time

* "No," a celebrated writer justly exclaims, "Heathens, forgive me this wrong; I blaspheme you by the comparison. *You* had your household gods, which you daily worshipped, and which nothing could induce you to resign!"

when the other scholars had half accomplished their morning tasks. Thus the teachers were disheartened, and the children, losing the usual motives to application and emulation, squandered their time, and finished their schooling almost before they began their education.

To return to the morning management of this irregular family—if the squalling of the children, and the ringing of the bell, allowed a moment's interval for conversation at the breakfast table, the usual topic was a discussion of arrangements for dinner. If Mrs. G— happened to be in a good humour, (for in domestic life, without good management, good humour is but a very occasional and uncertain thing,) she would say to her husband, "To-day we *will* contrive to have a good family joint, for I know it is what you prefer, and I really think it is the least trouble." If, on the other hand, Mr. G— was somewhat out of humour, he generally assumed the tone of dictation, and said, "Now, Mary, I do desire we may have a good family joint to-day: I am sick of always having steaks; and, say what you will, I am certain it is twice the expense, and three times the trouble in such a family as this." A little altercation generally ensued, (for most ill-managing wives are adepts in the science of self-justification,) and the result was a daily promise of the said "family joint;" but for the fulfilment—by the time the elder children were driven to school, and the younger ones to sleep, and the beds made, and the breakfast things cleared away, it wanted but a few minutes to the dinner hour, and Betty, as usual,

was called to run into the market, and get some mutton chops, or beefsteaks, for it was impossible to do any thing else; and the disappointed master and his apprentices, after waiting half an hour for their dinner, found it to consist, as usual, of ill-dressed steaks, and half-boiled potatoes.*

At washing times—oh, who could endure the horrors of a washing day, in a house like this!—it will be concluded that the confusion and wretchedness were such as to baffle description. Suffice it to say, that after several days of wasteful drudgery, the linen was, at length, “got up;” that is, it was cleared from the horse into the basket, and carried up stairs; but in a state scarcely distinguishable between dirty and clean. From this basket—for the linen scarcely ever reached the drawers—the different articles were drawn out from day to day, as occasion presented; and the emptying of the basket was the signal for washing again—a proclamation heard by all the male part of the family with utter dismay, as the period when every vestige of domestic comfort was to be obliterated, and the daily family annoyance to be redoubled.

From such family management, two conclusions may be fairly inferred—that the servants were utter strangers to rest and leisure; hence, the family was seldom served by persons of

* This picture of domestic mismanagement is not a fancied sketch, but one that was vividly presented to the writer's mind in early childhood, by a relative, who endured the misfortune of a seven years' apprenticeship in the family, in which the breakfast discussion, and the dinner disappointment, were as regular as the day.

respectability, and was perpetually exposed to the inconvenience of changing—and that the male part of the family, being uncomfortable, were discontented; hence arose continual family bickerings, and any place was preferred to home. Evening family worship was for a time kept up, but the hour was so uncertain and irregular, as to afford a too plausible excuse for the frequent absence of the young men: a few feeble remonstrances proved ineffectual, and, at length, it was set down as *impossible* to get together a family in the evening. Ah, now the family was indeed like a city without walls, an easy and unresisting prey to every lurking foe. The young men, roving abroad without object and without restraint, soon found their way to the haunts of dissipation; expenses were incurred beyond their means; their master's ill-ascertained and ill-secured property, presented a temptation too strong to be resisted, especially by youth who had lost the sacred restraint which family prayer imposes, in calling down the eye of Heaven to witness our daily actions. In two or three instances, individuals were ruined, families disgraced, and the master's substance wasted in consequence of family irregularity.

Such were the week-day proceedings: is it necessary to detail those of the sabbath? It will not be supposed that this family was remarked as among the most regular, punctual, and devout attendants in the house of prayer. A part of the family were generally absent, and after an unusual bustle to get ready, the rest arrived in time to disturb the devotions of more

punctual worshippers, and to distress their minister by their inconsistency. The heads of the family were gently admonished: reform was feebly attempted, and better hopes inspired; but the habit was too deeply rooted to be easily eradicated, and no vigorous efforts were made to subdue it. It soon sprung up with increased vigour, like weeds that had been cropped, instead of being extirpated. Fresh irregularities called for repeated admonition; reproof was resented; and the minister, whose fidelity had offended, was deserted. New places were occasionally sought, attended a few weeks, or months, and then forsaken, either for the attraction of some new popular preacher, or from some umbrage taken at the minister, the attendants, or the pew-opener. At length it became the vacant and unprofitable discussion of each sabbath, "Where shall we attend to-day?" and few were the steps that led to an almost total forsaking of the assembling of themselves together, and spending the sacred day like those who know not God—the morning in sloth, the afternoon in sensuality, and the evening in dissipation. But the parents, who had known something of the ways of God, could not sin at ease, like those in gross ignorance; conscience embittered all their pleasures. They remembered from whence they were fallen, and sighed after the better days of their youth, and mutually reproached each other, as the cause of the sad declension; but, alas, they did not repent, and do their first works. On the contrary, they plunged deeper into sin and misery, by

endeavouring to drown reflection in the seductive glass. Driven abroad at first, to seek the comforts which his own fireside denied him, G— had gradually sunk into this deleterious practice, and his broken constitution too plainly discovered its effects; and now, with shattered health and sinking spirits, an accusing conscience goading him, and the ruin of his family staring him in the face, he sought his only solace in that which was, in fact, the great aggravation, the very seal of his misery. Was it possible for any thing to add to his wretchedness? Yes; it was the overwhelming discovery, that his wife had resorted to the same fatal remedy to soothe her hours of solitude and privation. His cup of misery seemed now full, and his circumstances and his constitution gave way together, while the closed shutters of this once flourishing shop announced the master a bankrupt. And when the mistress, after a violent paroxysm of turbulent wailings, had sought her secret solace, and was sunk in the insensibility of intoxication, a paralytic stroke terminated the mortal existence of her unhappy husband, and left her a desolate and unprovided widow. Some of her elder children were placed out in life, but they had not acquired such habits of industry, steadiness, and self-denial, as alone would have enabled and inclined them to assist their mother, and the younger part of the family. A few friends, who had known and respected them in their better days, sought to alleviate their present afflictions, by establishing the widow in a little shop; but her inveterate

bad habits, and bad management, defeated their benevolent efforts; and, after several vain attempts to restore her to comfort and respectability, she became, with part of her family, an inmate of the PARISH WORKHOUSE.

WASHING TIME.

STRENGTH, activity, cleanliness, frugality, early rising, and good contrivance, are essential in the management of the wash-house and laundry. For want of these good qualities, either in the mistress or her assistants, some houses, during the period of washing and ironing, are scenes of laborious confusion, wasteful consumption, and general discomfort; so much so that the master of the house has exclaimed, with a woful countenance, "It is time for me to be off; I see the flags of distress are hung out; there will be no more peace and comfort at home this week." All this might be prevented by the general good contrivance and willing co-operation of all parties.

Those on whom the management of the business devolves, should contrive to do all with as much promptitude and despatch, and with as little interruption of family order, and as little infringement on family rules and regularity, as possible. Servants and washerwomen, too, should remember the golden rule, and not put their employers to expense, which they would admit to be needless and extravagant if the payment were to come out of their own purses; and young

mistresses especially should vigilantly guard against, and steadily resist extravagance and imposition on the part of those whom they employ. It is not intended to recommend stinginess: those who work ought to be liberally supplied with whatever is necessary for their work and their support; but waste should never be tolerated. Those who mean well, will have no objection to be looked after by a mistress; and, by proper superintendence and observation, both the employers and employed will improve their habits, management, and experience.

It has been a common, but very erroneous practice, for persons getting up early to washing, to take a glass of spirits by way of keeping out the cold. Many instances might be given of the evils resulting from this practice. Not one sound argument can be adduced in its favour; and we hope it is becoming obsolete. A cup of warm tea or coffee will be found to answer the purpose far better. As healthy and industrious a woman as ever stood to a wash-tub, always requested her employers to allow her a good basin of broth to begin work upon; this was, perhaps, at four o'clock in the morning: at eight, she had a good breakfast of tea or coffee, with a slice or two of cold bacon: she took nothing more till dinner-time, which was one o'clock; with that meal she took a draught of home-brewed beer: between four and five she had tea, by which time she had generally finished her day's work, and took home her supper and beer to enjoy with her family. Nothing could induce this woman to eat or drink between meals, to take more than

her regular quantity of beer, or to taste spirits; though she was often pressed to do so by the mistaken kindness of mistresses, and the persuasion and example of self-indulgent workfellows. This woman enjoyed uninterrupted health to a good old age; and at upwards of seventy, when she left off going out to day-work, took in the weekly washing of two families, which she performed with ease to herself, and with satisfaction to her employers. Every Monday morning she fetched, and every Saturday evening took home, the two baskets of linen on a barrow: the distance was upwards of a mile.

The activity and frugality of this woman rendered her so valuable to her employers, that some of them, at least, made a practice of giving her sixpence a day more than the regular sum, and were pleased with an opportunity of rendering her any occasional assistance; but her industry and economy rendered her quite independent. From her daily labour, and her pigs, and her bees, and her garden crops, she saved enough to make herself comfortable in old age.

Of at least a dozen women who, at one time or other, worked with her, and took their glass or two of gin, and their three or four pints of strong beer, and their morning and afternoon luncheons, not one was as strong at fifty as she was at seventy; and most of them became dependent on the parish, and ended their days in the workhouse. This fact is worth the notice both of rich and poor.

The laborious poor would do well to cultivate similar respectable habits, and employers would

do well to encourage them, by making good the adage, that "a servant seldom conscientiously saves her employer's sixpence, but sooner or later it finds its way into her own pocket."

THOUGHTLESSNESS.

YOUNG persons are apt to suffer habits of thoughtlessness and inattention to grow upon them, which greatly lessen their value in the domestic or social circle, and often produce very mischievous results to themselves and others. Yet they seldom estimate this fault aright, or charge upon it its real degree of criminality, or consider it their bounden duty to make a proper effort to cure themselves of it. It is no uncommon thing for a young person, not in general ill-disposed, who has received express injunctions to attend to some particular business at a certain time, when it is past, and the question is proposed, "Have you done as you were directed?" to reply, without any expression of very deep concern, "No, I never once thought of it; I entirely forgot it." At most the addition is, "I am sorry for it;" but generally there is no real self-reproach, nor any determined effort at reformation. Because the mischiefs that might result from an act of thoughtlessness do not always result, these people seem to forget the very possibility of their occurrence, or at least, to flatter themselves that *they* shall always be fortunate enough to escape. Sometimes, however, they are taught a very painful lesson, in the in-

convenience suffered by themselves, or those dear to them, in consequence of their forgetfulness. It is well if even such a lesson produces abiding improvement. The following painful incident has recently happened. Time alone will prove whether it has really wrought any salutary effects on the party concerned.

A much esteemed friend of the writer, on his way home from a journey undertaken with a view to health, became much worse, and was unable to proceed. Anxious, in any suitable way, to express heartfelt sympathy, and to offer any aid that might, in the slightest degree, alleviate the sufferings of her afflicted friend, or the fatigues of his nearest relatives, yet unwilling to obtrude on an afflicted family at a moment which might not be convenient, a note was left, soliciting the privilege of rendering any assistance that might be acceptable either by day or by night. Next day one of the family called, expressed cordial thanks, and said, that the offer would be accepted should occasion arise. From day to day inquiries were made after the sufferer. The replies were, "Very bad" — "worse" — "not expected to survive the night;" yet no call was made for the proffered services. On Wednesday morning, a female servant, a girl of much good feeling, but thoughtless, while pursuing her regular business, carelessly said to her mistress, "O, ma'am, I quite forgot to tell you, that on Sunday evening young Mr. — called, and wished to see you. It was just after you were gone out." "Did he leave any message?" "No." "Did you tell him where I was, and

at what time I should be at home?" "No."
"Did you offer to call Miss ——?" "No; she was up stairs; and I did not think of calling her, as he asked for you; and I never once thought of it since to tell you of it, when I happened to see you."

With agitated feelings the writer instantly hastened to the house of affliction, but it was too late; her friend had expired an hour or two before. The call on Sunday evening had been with a request that she would undertake the task of night-watching; and as she did not attend, it was concluded that she was out of town, and no further application was made for her services. Thus, through mere thoughtlessness and forgetfulness, she was deprived of the privilege of ministering to the last comforts of a long endeared friend; of testifying her sympathy by sharing the fatigues of his afflicted family, and of gathering instruction and consolation from the rich experience of a departing saint.

Young people, do not suffer this abominable habit to gain the ascendancy over you. Accustom yourselves, when any thing is committed to you, to get it so thoroughly riveted in your mind, that you can have no rest until your duty is discharged in the proper season. Do not shelter yourselves under the lamentation of having a bad memory; but consider it your bounden duty to strengthen that power, and to feel yourselves responsible for all the mischiefs that do or may result from its treachery. Act by a plan; have a time allotted for the performance of every class of duties; and, lest you should suffer any de-

tails to escape, keep at hand a memorandum book or slate, on which invariably to enter notes of every thing you ought to do. Keep also stated times, say every meal-time, or even every hour, to refer to this check on your memory, and see whether you have actually done the things required of you. The very regularity observed, and the time occupied in the engagement, will keep out many of those frivolous vagaries which, engrossing the attention and memory, thrust out matters of real importance. Thoughtless persons are not those who do not think at all, but those who bestow their thoughts on trifles, instead of fixing them on worthy objects. The smallest duty is a matter of real importance. It may be added, that those who feel conscious of a wandering imagination and defective memory, should, while they use every proper means for correcting the one and strengthening the other, make it a matter of frequent prayer that the Holy Spirit may turn away their eyes from beholding vanity, and write on their hearts all the laws of God, that thus they may become a memorandum book to themselves, and examples of conscientious regularity to those around them.

EVENING XI.



THE FAMILY OF JACOB.

A Sketch from Scripture.

THE early character of Jacob was that of a humble, quiet, domestic man, choosing the rural life of a shepherd, and not greatly concerned about refinements and luxuries ; but dwelling in tents. Virtue and piety are not necessarily connected with any particular calling or mode of life ; but it is well when young people choose those callings which are most free from temptations, and most useful to society. It is well, also, to be inured to a hardy, simple mode of life, which will make our wants few, and our hardships and difficulties fewer still. He is the richest man, not who has the largest possessions, but who has the most moderate desires. Jacob's dwelling in tents has been by some supposed to have a pious meaning, and that he was greatly attached to the places where his pious fathers were accustomed to worship God. It is a pleasing and promising feature in the character of young per-

sons, when they appear to value and enjoy the privileges of living in a pious family; it does not, however, appear that Jacob was a possessor of vital religion while in his father's house.

But the family history of Jacob, as well as his acquaintance with experimental religion, commences with his departure from the parental roof. He was partly driven thence by his own misconduct, for he fled from the face of his brother Esau, whom he had greatly injured and incensed; and he was sent forth partly with a view to his own settlement in life: "For," said his pious parents, "if Jacob choose a wife from among the vain, ungodly daughters of Heth, the closing years of our lives will be embittered, and the happiness of his own sacrificed. Let us send him to Haran, to seek a wife from among our relations there, where we hope some remains of piety and prudence are to be found." Accordingly Jacob was sent forth, but privately and unattended, the better to secure him against the rage of his offended brother.

The first day of his solitary journey, we may suppose, was passed in reflection on the scenes of his childhood and youth, and on his own conduct, mingled with many anxious feelings as to his present circumstances and future movements. As he approached the city of Luz, the shades of evening gathered around him, and he sought refreshment for his wearied frame by reclining on the ground in the open air, supporting his head on a pillow of stones. Many a child of pious

parents has been removed from the comforts of home, and brought into circumstances of privation and distress, there to learn his need of the consolations of religion, and to become experimentally acquainted with the God of his fathers. It was thus with Jacob. In his incommodious lodging not only was his body refreshed with sleep, but his soul received the condescending visits of God. By an extraordinary dream, Jehovah declared himself to Jacob as the God of his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and as especially taking him also into covenant relation, promising to bless him, and make him a blessing, to go with him and protect him in all his way, to bring him back in peace, and to bestow on his posterity the very land on which he was now reposing. How suitable and encouraging to the mind of the exile must have been these assurances! "Has God, the God of my fathers, indeed taken me into covenant with Him? Has He indeed overlooked my unworthiness, and forgiven my sin, and promised to bestow the blessing which my father could only implore? Amazing condescension! matchless grace! Here then I will erect an altar to the God of my mercies; here will I consecrate myself to his service: henceforth his precepts shall be my guide, his promises my support, and his glory the end and object of my being. Let me be his, living, dying, and for ever." There is one thing in Jacob's piety deserving of notice and imitation; he not merely engaged to consecrate a tenth part of his future possessions to the service of God; but he immediately poured oil on the

altar. He spared a part of his present subsistence, of which perhaps he had but a scanty supply. The best proof of sincerity is not our talking of the great things we would do, if we had the means, but our doing what is in our power, however little that may be.

Thus refreshed and encouraged, Jacob might well go on his way rejoicing; and how would the hearts of his pious parents have rejoiced, could they have been aware of the intercourse so happily established between their son and God! They doubtless still followed him with their prayers, the prayers of faith, and they rested satisfied that the God whom they trusted would do for them, and for him, exceedingly above all they could ask or think; for it has been justly observed, "Jacob's journey, both in the errand on which he went, and the homely, solitary style of his travelling, was an eminent instance of faith and obedience to the Divine will; not in Jacob himself only, but in his parents also, who could thus trust the prop of their hopes, and the heir of the promise, to dangers so great, and distresses so certain, with no security but what arose from the truth, the mercy, and faithfulness of God." Happy is it when parental anxieties take a similar direction, and experience a similar relief.

Haran, whither Jacob's footsteps were directed, was about five hundred miles from Beersheba, where his pious father resided. We have, however, no farther particulars of his journey, until we find him seated beside a well in Haran, waiting for the neighbouring shepherds

to bring their flocks thither to water, and intending to inquire of them concerning Laban, his mother's brother. Presently, among the rest, came Rachel, the daughter of Laban, with whom Jacob immediately claimed relationship, and for whom he conceived a strong partiality, which ripened into lasting and mutual attachment. It was well that each possessed qualities which could secure esteem, as well as excite admiration. When sudden attachments are formed from mere personal attractions, the most disastrous results are to be apprehended.

Now commences Jacob's intercourse with Laban, in the course of which striking instances of retributive justice are seen. Jacob served Laban faithfully and disinterestedly; there was no craft or unkindness on his part towards Laban. But Laban's craft, covetousness, and oppression, were the means, in the hand of God, of chastising Jacob for the craft he had practised on Isaac and on Esau.

Jacob was at first admitted as a guest in the house of his uncle Laban: but as he soon proved himself diligent and serviceable, Laban was desirous of retaining him under a regular contract. Jacob took this opportunity of avowing his attachment to Rachel, and offered to serve seven years for her. Laban readily agreed to the bargain; Jacob cheerfully entered on his servitude, and by his diligence and fidelity approved himself to his employer, still animated by the hope of his desired reward, the possession of his beloved Rachel.

But at the expiration of Jacob's servitude,

when he claimed of Laban the fulfilment of the contract, a gross deception was practised upon him. Taking advantage of a custom in that country, at the close of the marriage feast to conduct the veiled bride to the house of her husband, Laban was base enough to substitute, for Rachel, his elder and less attractive daughter Leah. When remonstrated with for this act of treachery, at once to pacify his injured son-in-law, and to retain his valuable services, Laban offered to give Rachel also, on condition of seven years more servitude. Jacob consented, and was thus drawn into that fruitful source of domestic misery, polygamy, or the having more than one wife. In addition to this, two handmaids were given as subordinate wives, Zilpah and Bilhah. We shall not be surprised to find much domestic confusion and unhappiness, in a family where there existed so gross a departure from the original law of marriage. Is it too much to say, that even these evils may be traced up to the deceit of Rebekah, which rendered Jacob's departure necessary, and involved him in all the train of hardships and disasters that attended upon it?

“The hand of the diligent maketh rich?” Jacob was diligent, prudent, and faithful, in the management of his own affairs, and those of Laban, and, under the blessing of God, they prospered exceedingly in his hands. He became rich in cattle and servants—the wealth of that age and country; and even selfish Laban was compelled to acknowledge, that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake. It is a great

matter to constrain those who will not admit the excellency of our principles, to admit the goodness of our conduct.

But wealth alone is no security for happiness. Jacob's peace was continually interrupted by the envious bickerings of the rival sisters. His well-earned property was grudged him by the sons of Laban, and probably also by Laban himself; and he found, by painful experience, that prosperity brings cares and vexations as well as want. He found his situation both uncomfortable and unsafe, and was no doubt often casting in his mind how he should effect the removal of his numerous family and his great possessions. But one consideration Jacob never lost sight of, and it was sufficient to sustain his mind under all his trials. He came to that place in obedience to a Divine command, and under a Divine assurance of safe conduct and provision, which had hitherto been abundantly fulfilled, and which, under all his hardships, encouraged the confidence, that in due time a way would be made plain for his departure. While we are enabled to maintain a good conscience, and are found in the way of duty, we need not be greatly moved by the unkindness and malignity of men; but may commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously, who will, in due time, bring forth our "righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day," and overrule the most trying and seemingly adverse dispensations for ultimate good.

That God, who sees the oppressor and the oppressed, at length intimated to Jacob that his

period of servitude in Haran was closed, and that he might remove hence: "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and I will be with thee." Happy the individual, and the family, whose movements and repose are thus directed and guarded. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Because thou hast made the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," Psa. xci. 1, 9—11.

On receiving this welcome intimation, Jacob immediately consulted Leah and Rachael, and obtained their ready concurrence in the departure of the family. It is pleasant to observe the spirit of harmony that prevailed on this occasion; and it affords a hint that where persons are inseparably connected, even though the connexion may not have been itself desirable, yet it is much better to make mutual sacrifices, and as much as possible to live peaceably together. When Jacob appealed to the daughters of Laban as to his fidelity and diligence, and the unkind returns he had received, they readily admitted it, and even expatiated more than was necessary or graceful on the selfishness of their father; but Jacob, more accustomed to regard all his affairs as in the hand of God, turned aside from the injustice of man, to the goodness and faithfulness of God. "God suffered him not to hurt me." "God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to

me." Nothing tends more to soothe the spirit, wounded by the unkindness or the treachery of man, than the consideration, "They are but the sword, or the rod, in the hand of my Father." Jacob proceeded to inform them that the angel of God had appeared to him in a dream, had reminded him of the manifestations and the engagements of Bethel, and encouraged him to return to the land of his fathers. It is very delightful to have these special seasons and memorials to which to refer, either for the encouragement of our faith, or as excitements to our obedience and fidelity; and the providence of God, in a very remarkable way, sometimes brings to our remembrance experiences and engagements, which, amidst the pursuits and the pleasures of life, we are too apt to forget. Has there been no period of our existence when we poured out our soul in trouble, and when we vowed a vow unto the Lord? Did He hear our cry, and grant us deliverance? and have we indeed performed the vow which our lips have uttered, and our mouth hath spoken? These inquiries surely demand and deserve our serious consideration.

Jacob, having obtained the consent of his wives, immediately prepared for his departure, and took the opportunity of Laban's absence at sheepshearing, to collect his family and substance, and set off for the land of Canaan. It is painful to an ingenuous mind, to adopt any thing like concealment; but in this case there was reason to conclude, that if Laban and his sons had been aware of Jacob's intention, they

would have made some injurious attempt against his person or property. This probability was confirmed by the angry manner in which Laban pursued after the fugitives, with evident designs of mischief, had not the God of Jacob restrained the wrath of the enemy. We do not think enough of the goodness of God in restraining the wickedness of men. If sinners were permitted to effect all the malicious purposes they form, the foundations of social order would soon be broken up, and the faithful would fail from among the children of men.

Laban, finding himself restrained from injuring Jacob, came up with professions of great tenderness for his daughters and their little ones. He, however, bitterly reproached Jacob with having taken away his gods. Jacob with honest indignation repelled the charge, and appealed to Laban for the general integrity, fidelity, and disinterestedness which had characterized the whole of his service, at the same time piously ascribing his preservation and prosperity to the God of his fathers. What a difference between Laban's gods and the God of Jacob! Laban's gods, in whom he trusted, had no power to preserve themselves from being stolen, and carried away and concealed; what could they do for their silly votaries! But the Lord God of Jacob could, and did protect and deliver his servant, restrain the anger of others against him, direct his movements, bless his substance, and cheer his heart with the consolations of heavenly grace! Happy is he that bath the Lord God of Jacob for his help, and

whose hope is in the Lord God that made heaven and earth !

Jacob was indeed utterly ignorant of the removal of the objects of Laban's idolatry ; he entertained no doubt that every one in his company was actuated by the same honest principle as himself, and would entertain the same contempt for these golden deities ; and with a degree of rashness he said, " With whomsoever they are found let him die." We cannot too carefully avoid rash imprecations ; they can add nothing to the weight of truth, and may, in various ways, prove a snare or a dagger to those who utter them. Rachel had concealed these teraphim, or household gods. We do not know her motive : it might be in the hope of drawing her father from his vain and idolatrous confidence ; however, her conduct was blameable. When Rachel soon afterwards died, it is probable that Jacob with pain reflected on his rash expression ; and the images afterwards became a snare in the family. The parting between Laban and Jacob was amicable. They set up a pillar as a memorial between them, each solemnly promising never to pass that stone to injure the other. Jacob then offered a sacrifice to the God of his fathers ; the whole company feasted together, and each went on their way.

But new difficulties awaited Jacob and his family, and a peculiar manifestation was vouchsafed to fortify his mind to meet them. Jacob beheld the angels of God as an host encamped for his defence. These holy and powerful servants of God are always stationed round about

those that fear Him, though not visible to the mortal eye. It is no uncommon thing, for the saints to experience extraordinary degrees of spiritual strength and consolation, in order to prepare them for some heavy trial that awaits them, but of which, at the time, they are not at all aware. It was thus with Jacob. Having heard that his brother Esau had settled in Mount Seir, as they approached towards that part, Jacob sent a respectful message, hoping to conciliate his brother, and to convince him that he had no desire or occasion to interrupt him in the possession of any worldly advantages which might be connected with the birth-right. Esau had been already apprized of his brother's approach; and the messengers of Jacob had not proceeded far before they met him, at the head of four hundred armed men, coming apparently with hostile intentions against Jacob. Jacob's conduct, in this instance, was such as became a man of God. He was not at his wit's end, wringing his hands in consternation and despair, like men of the world, who have no refuge in trouble. Neither did he indulge the presumptuous confidence of those who profess to trust in God, while they neglect to use the proper means and precautions within their power. No; he prayed, and trusted, and acted. He first placed his train in the best posture for security and defence; dividing the servants and cattle into two bands, hoping that if one should be smitten, the other might escape. Doubtless, while thus engaged, his heart was continually ascending in devout supplications to

God his strength. What a mercy that we may pray and act at the same time; not to the neglect of set seasons and retirement for devotion, but to the improvement of those moments when, on occasions of emergency, the hands are most busy and the heart most anxious. Oh, then, to dart a thought, a sigh, a wish to God! This is the way to obtain strength from Heaven, and to have the soul pervaded with the peace of God that passes all understanding. But, having made the necessary arrangements, Jacob withdrew, more expressly to plead with God the covenant relation in which he stood, the express command which directed his movements, and the gracious promises that encouraged his confidence. He humbly acknowledged his own insignificance and unworthiness, and the great mercy and truth already manifested to him, and implored succour in the present time of need. Having thus committed his cause to God, he again betook himself to a prudent management of affairs. Another expedient occurred to his mind, and was immediately adopted. May we not conclude it was suggested by Him who knows the human heart, and who intended to use it as a means for softening the heart of Esau? Yes; from Him all good counsels proceed, and to Him we should ascribe the skill that devises, as well as the success that attends, our best directed efforts. It was to send to Esau a princely present, consisting of more than five hundred head of cattle, and to intimate that he, with all his family, advanced to meet Esau with all the confidence of a friend,

and all the kindness of a brother. Having sent off the servants and droves of cattle, and disposed, for the night, of his family and remaining substance, Jacob again retired, and passed the night in fervent supplications. It was at this time that he wrestled with the angel, and prevailed, and hence obtained the honourable appellation of Israel, "a prince of God." Filled with holy wonder at the Divine manifestation, he called the place Peniel; for there, said he, "I have seen God, and my life is preserved." Thus divinely strengthened, he went forth, and immediately met his brother: but the enmity of Esau's heart was disarmed; he ran and embraced his brother, and they wept together the tears of fraternal love and tenderness. From this time they appear to have maintained cordiality towards each other, though, perhaps, from the dissimilarity of their tastes and habits, no very intimate intercourse subsisted between them.

Jacob and his family then resided awhile on the east side of Jordan, and afterwards passed over to Shechem, where he built an altar "to God, the God of Israel." We love to read of a good man rearing an altar wherever he pitches his tent; but, in this instance, we wait with anxious expectation to hear of Jacob, being now brought back in peace to the land of his fathers, hastening to fulfil his vow at Bethel. But, alas, the good man delayed, until expressly reminded, and recalled to his duty by the voice of God himself. Severe family troubles had intervened, which, probably, were designed to chastise this

delay, and which indeed were, in a great measure, the natural consequences of it. When the people of God are remiss and careless, they are often permitted to experience that their own wickedness corrects them, and their own backslidings reprove them. Jacob and his family remained at Shechem, when they ought to have been at Bethel; the power of religion declined; the images brought by Rachel from Haran were retained in the house, and probably tainted the minds of the children with impiety and idolatry; unprofitable and improper acquaintances were formed with the inhabitants of the land; Dinah, the only daughter in the family, fell into the snares of dissipation and seduction. Her virtue and her honour were sacrificed; the peace of the family broken up; the indignation of her brothers Simeon and Levi was excited, which, instead of producing its proper effects in deep personal and family humiliation before God, was suffered to vent itself in an act of most cruel and treacherous revenge; and the religion of the family was brought into reproach by their misconduct, instead of gaining respect, as it had done in all places wherever their pious ancestors had sojourned. How affectingly does the history of Jacob's family, at this period, enforce caution against the first remissness in duty, the first approach to sin!

Having received the Divine summons, Jacob cleared his house of its corruptions and idols, and went up to Bethel to make an altar to God, who answered him in the day of his distress. Under the immediate protection of God, this

large company arrived there in safety, and built an altar to the God of Bethel. There death entered the family, and called away an aged and faithful servant, Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah. It is a sight less common than pleasing, to see the funeral of an aged servant attended by a weeping family, in which she has faithfully served for three generations.

Jacob was next called to a severer trial than any that had yet befallen him. His beloved Rachel was suddenly taken from him, after giving birth to her second son. This trial must have been, in no small degree, embittered by the recollection, that Rachel had far too anxiously desired children, so much as to say, "Give me children, or I die!" How apt we are to ask that which would prove most injurious! and hence, how wise it is to leave the choice of our inheritance to Him who cannot err! Under this most painful bereavement, Jacob discovered suitable resignation; and he lived to acknowledge, notwithstanding his numerous trials, that he had been redeemed from all evil.

Fresh afflictions awaited the patriarch in the misconduct of his elder sons, Reuben and Judah, who each acted in a very unwise and criminal manner. Thus we find five of this numerous family guilty of conduct which grieved the heart of their venerable parent. At a subsequent period, ten of Jacob's sons were, more or less, concerned in an act of fraternal cruelty, that embittered many years of his life. There were only his two youngest on whom he could look with unmingled satisfaction, and one of those was soon

removed from him. Surely there must have been a grievous error in the education of Jacob's children, or gross impropriety in the examples set them. The whole may, probably, in a great measure, be referred to differences of opinion, management, and interest among the mothers. Their jealousies and bickerings would take off their attention from the duties of maternal piety, and set before their children sad examples of the worst passions of human nature. If the children of a family are to be trained up in the way they should go, it is highly essential that the heads of the family should concur and co-operate both by instruction and example.

After the death of Rachel we hear no more of the female part of the family. From the tender affection cherished by Jacob for the memory of his beloved Rachel, it is natural that her children should, in some degree, engross his affection, especially while their tender age so much required parental care, and the conduct of their elder brethren so ill requited it; but the patriarch erred in manifesting an unwise and unwarrantable partiality. Seasons and circumstances render it impossible that parents should pay precisely the same degree of attention, or extend the same degree of indulgence, to every child, at every time; and indeed it is not desirable. The infant, the sick child, the penitent, the child just leaving home, or just returning to it after a long absence, may engross for awhile the parent's regard, without exciting in the minds of the rest one jealous feeling—one suspicious thought that a brother or sister is more beloved

than themselves. In a well regulated family all are willing that each should receive all the attention and assistance that his peculiar circumstances demand. It is the invidious, and arbitrary, and unnecessary distinction in point of dress, or food, or pocket-money, or liberty, that awakens, in the several members of a family, unkindly feelings towards each other, and towards the parents who make these unwise distinctions. Jacob fell into this weakness, which he discovered in arraying his beloved Joseph in a garment of various colours, and probably conferring on him other marks of distinction, which rendered him obnoxious to his brethren. One cannot but remark the weakness and folly of such conduct; how little, if at all, could it have contributed even to the momentary happiness of the darling son: indeed, if any gratification were enjoyed, it must have been injurious to the mind of the individual; and it excited the most malignant passions in a great part of the family, and was one occasion of many years of misery to the rest.

The partiality of the father, the abilities and manners of the youth himself, and especially some remarkable intimations from on high, concurred in pointing out Joseph for superiority. Hence his brethren, moved with envy, conspired against him, and sold him; and by staining with blood his gaudy robe, imposed on their father the heart-rending conclusion, that without doubt Joseph was devoured by an evil beast. Many years of painful separation ensued: Jacob anticipating the grave as his desired resting-place,

and hoping in death to join his beloved Joseph, whom he had no idea of again meeting in the land of the living ; Joseph meanwhile passing through many and severe trials and afflictions—enslaved, tempted, falsely accused, imprisoned, neglected—at length raised to dignity and honour ; but those nearest and dearest to him knew it not ; and his guilty brethren, torn with remorse and undefined apprehension, whenever they cast a thought on Joseph, or heard their deluded father bemoan his loss ; Jacob, too, again punished, by being imposed upon, for having imposed on his father Isaac. Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth !

At length, after many turns in the mysterious wheels of Providence, this long separated family was brought together again, under circumstances the most affecting and delightful. But, in order to the meeting with Joseph, Jacob must part with Benjamin. Benjamin, the child of his old age, the child of his right hand, the child of his Rachel's sorrow, the solace of his sinking years. Poor old man ! we wonder not to hear him say, "All these things are against me." It is not unworthy of remark, that when the saints of God have shrunk from any particular trial, and said, or been ready to say, "That trial I cannot sustain ; if it should be brought upon me I must sink under it," they have generally been brought under the affliction they dreaded ; and also, that they have experienced strength equal to their day ; and have often ultimately found, that their greatest subsequent enjoyments sprang out of those very trials.

Ye feeble saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Joseph and his brethren had a happy meeting, and a cordial reconciliation was effected ; but the circumstances that attended it were such as humbled their pride, and set their sins in order before their eyes. Brought into unmerited distress and disgrace, conscience was aroused, and said, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us. God hath found out our iniquity." Sin will assuredly " find out " the sinner, and make him smart in shame and sorrow—in deep penitence, or in endless punishment. The sin of unkindness in families is not thought of as it ought to be ; but it is one that is often requited in this life, either in injuries sustained by one who has in former times inflicted them, or in bitter remorse when no opportunity remains of redressing the injury. How lovely is that precept, and how happy the family that is regulated by it, " Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ! " Not only are the members of it happy during the period of their continuance together, but the sting of separation is robbed of its venom.

To Joseph, the dutiful and affectionate child, was assigned the high filial honour of supporting his aged parent ; an honour and delight which none can appreciate but the child who has

enjoyed it ; nor can any but a parent enter into the soothing delight of reclining on a beloved child. It is, perhaps, the only case in mature life in which dependence is free from every thing irksome, painful, and degrading. What sight can be more pleasing, than youth in its bloom, or manhood in its vigour, ministering with all the respectful tenderness of filial affection, to the wants and comforts of decrepit age ! On the other hand, what can be more unnatural, than a child possessing the conveniences, perhaps the elegances of life, yet who, from pride or selfishness, suffers his venerable parent to want those comforts which he could impart ! Nothing ; except to heighten the colouring of the hideous picture, the young man is represented as one who professes the religion of the gospel.

Joseph's brethren, too, were dependent on him ; nor could all the generosity and forgiving love of Joseph do away from their minds, the painful consciousness of having merited far other treatment at his hands. Among many other motives for showing kindness to those below us, this should not be overlooked—the probability that amidst the various vicissitudes of life, we ourselves may need it ; and nothing can be more humbling than to be dependent on the kindness of those who have experienced nothing but unkindness from us.

A few more years, and we find the family surrounding the dying bed of the venerable patriarch. The sayings of aged and dying persons are generally weighty : several of Jacob's are preserved.

At one hundred and twenty years old, a period much longer than is now allotted to human existence, Jacob said, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Life, then, at longest, is but short. Sorrow and trouble are mingled with the lot of man, from which piety affords no exemption. This world is not our home, but our life is a "pilgrimage" through it, to a state of never-ending existence. How important that, as pilgrims, our steps should be set in the right direction, and our minds steadily fixed on the end of our course !

Jacob gratefully acknowledged the mercy and faithfulness of God, which he had abundantly experienced. "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil." It is highly consolatory to the aged saint to look back on his past experience ; and truly edifying to those around him, when he reviews all the way that the Lord his God has led him, to humble him and to prove him, and acknowledges that not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord his God has spoken. Jacob encouraged those around firmly to believe, and fully to expect the fulfilment of those promises which remained : "I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." Happy the dying parent who can look round on all his children, and indulge a good hope, that God will be with them as a God of mercy and covenant, and that

he will bring them all to that better land of their fathers above. But oh, if there be one and another giving too sad evidence that they have not taken hold on their father's God, what gloom must it cast over his mind ! and oh, how sad to such a child afterwards to reflect, " My father is dead, but God still lives ! He is the witness of all my actions. He is as true to his threatenings as to his promises ; and he has declared that if I forsake him, he will cast me off for ever." Chilling thought ! one hope yet remains : let it not be trifled away ; even now, young man, or young woman, it is said, " If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." Him that cometh He will " in no wise cast out."

Jacob earnestly desired that piety might descend to his children and to his children's children. " God which fed me,—bless the lads ; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac." And this has been the great concern of the godly in all ages. Worldly men think much of leaving a great name, or a great estate, to their children ; but oh, this is lighter than nothing, and vanity, compared with inheriting the faith of pious ancestors. The prayer of faith for beloved children, is not that they may be rich and great, and set upon the high places of the earth ; food and raiment, and a contented mind are enough to ask of worldly good, but oh, let them be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting ! Let one say, " I am the Lord's," and another " call himself by the name of Jacob ;" and another " subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and

surname himself by the name of Israel;" and let all meet at last in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

MOVING HABITATION.

A FAMILY had long occupied a pleasant residence, to which they were much attached, and in which they had spent many happy hours, days, and years. From time to time one convenience after another had been added: here a closet, there a grate; in one room a folding door to keep out the draught, in another a window to command a beautiful prospect. It was sometimes asked, "Is the house your own?" "No," was the reply; "but we have a good long lease."

At length, the house assumed rather a shabby appearance: one room wanted papering; and, in another, the ceiling mourned for the white-washer's brush; several articles of furniture wanted replacing, and even the windows appeared not so bright as formerly. How was this to be accounted for? Had the inmates become indifferent to the neatness and comforts to which they had been accustomed? Here was the reply, "Our lease is nearly out, and we do not know that we shall be able to renew it. It is not worth while to bestow much labour or expense on a place we are likely soon to leave." By and by, a friend again calling on the family, found the house in confusion; many of the best articles of furniture were removed; some individuals of the family were absent, and those who

remained were employed in taking down furniture and packing it up. "How are you all?" inquired the visitor. "Sick to death of this dirty littered place!" was the reply; "we are going to move."—"What! tired of the old house that you used to be so fond of?" "This house is about to be pulled down, so it is in vain to be fond of it now; beside, we are moving to a much better house, in a better situation, and in every respect more desirable."—"And where are the other members of the family?" "They are gone to the new house, and are preparing it for our reception."—"What a desolation your garden appears, which was formerly so blooming and beautiful!" "It has not been worth while to bestow much pains on it this year, as we were likely to leave it; and the best of the plants we have removed to our new garden."—"You seem now to be more concerned about, and interested in your new abode, than in this which you have so long occupied." "Certainly; it is of little concern to us what becomes of a house we are just going to leave, but it is a great matter to make our new house comfortable, in which we hope to reside for a long time to come."

True: and why is not the sentiment, "We are going to move," as present with our minds in a matter of infinitely greater importance? "Here we have no continuing city:" we have no long lease of "this earthly house of our tabernacle;" we are but mere tenants at will, liable to be displaced at a moment's notice, and the building levelled to the dust. Are we sufficiently concerned about the matter? Is

there a desirable mansion prepared for us? Have we "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?" Are the title-deeds safe in our possession? Or, rather, have we committed them to the hands of a faithful Friend, in whom we can trust, fully persuaded that He is able to keep what we have committed to Him against that day? Are we often sending our thoughts to that better mansion? chiefly employed in preparation to enter upon it? Are our affections set on things above? And can we in some happy moments say,

"My thoughts and joys are all pack'd up and gone :

My treasure is in heaven ; my heart is in heaven ; it is but a few steps, and I shall be there myself ; and all my best friends are gone before, or will follow shortly after?"

EXAMINATION ; OR, MY NEIGHBOUR'S GARDEN.

My next door neighbour, some weeks ago, removed to a distant residence, and his house and garden stand unoccupied. As my window commands a full view of the latter, I could scarcely help from day to day noticing it. I looked thereon, and received instruction.

I observed the rapid growth of weeds ; a large bed, which a very few weeks since was neatly hoed and raked, and bearing a crop of useful productions, is now completely overgrown with nettles, dandelion, and chickweed. Ah, I thought, such is the tendency of our corrupt

hearts by nature. They are the fruitful soil for every noxious and sinful disposition. What a mercy that our God does not leave us without culture, but provides us with the means of instruction ; sheds on us the influences of his grace, and often, by the keen frost of disappointment, or the sharp hoe of affliction, cuts up the weeds which would else overspread the soil.

But not only is evil encouraged, but the good is injured, by neglect. Vines and rose-trees have been blown down and broken for want of training and support. Some tender flowers are cut off by exposure to the keen air, and others more hardy have wasted their beauty and their fragrance unenjoyed. Yonder a fine bed of vegetables seems forgotten, and likely to perish for want of using ; and the uncultivated state of the whole affords no promise of produce for another year. Ah ! methought, how much land lies waste for want of moral culture ! How many a fine mind is overrun with the weeds of ignorance and depravity, which might produce a rich and valuable crop ! How many precious opportunities are squandered ! how many sacred hours suffered to run to waste ! and what grievous destitution will be felt, when the well-cultured garden, under the blessing of God, is yielding its rich produce, but when of the uncultivated soul it shall be said, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved !" Jer. viii. 20.

I looked over my neighbour's uncultivated garden, and observed, that though the weeds were so abundant, no valuable produce sprang forth of itself. Why should there not be clus-

ters of valuable and useful vegetables, as well as clusters of weeds? Because the ground is degenerated on account of the sin of man. Thorns and thistles it brings forth; but in the sweat of man's brow must he obtain what is really valuable. The heart of man, too, is become evil. It brings forth evil spontaneously, and continually; but what is good is foreign to the soil. It must be planted there by the hand of labour, and cultivated with assiduous care; and the breezes and the dews, and the rains and the sunshine of Heaven must be invoked to give it life, and bring it to perfection. This is a very humbling thought; but, well improved, it stimulates to constant diligence, watchfulness, and fervent prayer.

Having observed the defects in my neighbour's garden, my attention was directed to my own; and there I found many weeds which had been suffered to spring up unobserved, and several neglected spots where better crops might have been raised, and branches which would be benefited by pruning or training; and methought, "Since mine is professedly a cultivated garden, I have little whereof to boast, but much to stimulate to more diligent improvement for the future. I hope it is not too late to repair some of these neglects; but certainly there is no time to be lost." My soliloquy closed with the following reflections:—

1. There is nothing good to be had without taking pains.

2. I hope I have not observed my neighbour's neglected garden with a censorious and

ill-natured eye. There is always danger of this when we observe the faults of others.

3. Can any well-meant and rightly-directed effort of mine, made in the spirit of love, contribute to the improvement of my neighbour's garden? If so, does not the royal law of love require that I should make it? Is my neighbour exposed to any danger of which he is not aware, or does he possess any means of improvement, or opportunity of usefulness, which he passes unheeded? Does not neighbourly kindness dictate that I should offer a gentle and modest hint?

4. It is well when any incident leads to self-examination and self-cultivation.

5. We are too apt to look upon our own gardens, and our own characters, with partial self-complacency. It is, therefore, the part of true wisdom to invite the scrutiny of an unerring Judge. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting," Psa. cxix. 23, 24.

EVENING XII.



THE HEBREW FAMILY.

A Sketch from Scripture.

MUCH of the instruction of Scripture is incidental, and may be overlooked by a superficial reader; but those accustomed carefully to trace things to their causes and their consequences, will often, in reading the sacred narrative, discern and be instructed by the over-ruling hand of God, in circumstances apparently trivial and incidental. This remark will be illustrated in the few particulars furnished us in Scripture, concerning that family of which the two most distinguished individuals were Moses, the deliverer and lawgiver of the people of Israel, and Aaron, the first high priest of the Jewish church.

What do we know of Amram and Jochebed, the heads of this family? A superficial reader of Scripture might be ready to reply, "Little more than their bare names;" but a closer attention will lead us to discover traits of real excellence of character, and such as by their relative influence give these individuals a claim to

be regarded as among the distinguished benefactors of mankind.

The descendants of Israel, brought for succour into the land of Egypt, in the time of Joseph, and of that Pharaoh who was his patron and friend, had astonishingly multiplied in that land; so that, from about seventy persons, Israel was now become a great nation, of six hundred thousand able men, besides women, children, and aged persons. Joseph and his patron were long since dead; a new monarch filled the throne of Egypt, and new ministers directed its councils. The generosity which encouraged the confidence of Jacob and his posterity had given way to a jealous, cruel, sanguinary policy; which, dreading the increase of Israel, attempted to undermine their strength by excessive labour, to break their spirit by severity, and to prevent their future increase by putting to death their male offspring as soon as born.

Circumstances of such extreme hardship and danger might well be supposed to embitter all the comforts of domestic life, and to deter many persons from forming family connexions; but so remarkably were this people encouraged by the special promises, and preserved by the watchful care of Jehovah, that the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied. Among the oppressed families of Israel, Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi, were the parents of three children:—Miriam, a girl, perhaps of ten or twelve years of age; Aaron, three years old, who probably was born before the cruel edict

commanding the death of the male infants; and Moses, a new-born babe, whose peculiar beauty awakened at once the strongest emotions of parental fondness, and agonizing apprehensions of the moment that should snatch him from those fond embraces, and consign him to the ruffian hand of the executioner, the terror of the waves, or the devouring jaws of the monsters of the Nile.*

It seems that not only were the Egyptians commanded to watch and give notice of the birth of Hebrew children, but the parents themselves were required to give up their offspring to the destruction decreed to them. But "by faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment," Heb. xi. 23. Faith always has respect to some intimation of the Divine will or intentions; the one dictates the obedience of faith, the other encourages its expectations. Hence we are led to conclude, that the parents of Moses had received some intimation that their child would be preserved, and were encouraged to adopt such extraordinary means for its preservation. We are here

* To such peculiar distresses parents in general are not exposed; but in the most favoured circumstances parents are exercised by tender and watchful anxieties on behalf of their infant offspring, of which at the time they are totally unconscious, and which they can never duly appreciate until they themselves sustain the parental relation. Hence arises a strong claim to filial love and obedience; and the youth who witnesses his parent's tenderness to a younger child, should feel himself called upon to remember his own debt of gratitude to parental care.

pleasingly struck with the established connexion between the use of every lawful means, and entire reliance on the Divine blessing to crown them with success, and to render them efficient. For three months the babe was concealed, doubtless with extreme difficulty, and at the hazard of the lives of the parents and all concerned. But, at length, concealment was no longer possible; and then the mother prepared a little ark, or basket, of bulrushes, carefully daubed it within and without with slime and pitch, and having placed therein the cherished infant, deposited it among the flags of the Nile, and committed it to the care of Providence. How pleasant to observe confidence without presumption, and attention, diligence, and zeal, free from incredulity or self-reliance! Then, and then only, may we with humble confidence rely on Providence, when we possess the honest consciousness of having done our utmost to help ourselves. Why not expose the child at first? Because there was a possibility of concealing it. Why not, when it was exposed, cast it naked on the stream, and rely on God, who was as able to preserve it in that condition, as floating in its little ark of rushes? Because that would have been tempting, not trusting Providence. It was a duty to construct a vessel of such a form as would naturally float; a duty carefully to cement every chink and seam by which water might be admitted; a duty to watch the fate of the precious bark, and to adopt every means that ingenuity and prudence could devise, as much as if the preservation of the infant depended solely on that care and diligence

employed ; and then it became a duty and a privilege to cast the care of the whole on God, as entirely as if no means had been resorted to. Let us never forget it is not our *work*, but our *care* which we are encouraged to cast on Him who careth for us, and who has said, " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5.

The mother now returned home, and set her daughter Miriam to watch the event ; and from the promptitude, address, and fidelity discovered by this girl, we are led to conclude she had been well educated. To see young persons of an age to be useful, and yet given up to indolence, inconsideration, and frivolity, leads us to fear there has been a radical defect in their education ; while the conduct of active, intelligent, young persons, confers pleasure on all who behold it, and reflects credit both on themselves and their parents.

At this point parental care and diligence can do no more ; and now the superintending care, the over-ruling hand of Providence become visible. The wind, the tide, the temperature of the weather, the hearts of princes, far beyond the direction of man, are all under the control of God, and he renders all subservient to the fulfilment of His designs. He inclined the princess of Egypt, on that particular day and hour, to seek the refreshment of bathing, or to wash linen—an employment at that time not disdained even by rulers' daughters. He directed her steps to that precise spot of the river where the infant Hebrew was exposed. He excited her curiosity to examine the contents of the frail

bark, and inspired her heart with pity towards the weeping babe. Thus, when the great ones of the earth intend to follow their own inclinations, and obtain their own gratifications, perhaps to pursue their ambitious and vain-glorious designs, they are made the unconscious instruments of fulfilling the designs of Providence. How consolatory this thought to those who rely on the wisdom and loving-kindness that overrule the affairs of men! How confounding the displays of this superintending care to those "fools" who "say in their hearts, No God!"

The remarkable providence of God over infants, in preserving them from dangers unseen by the parental eye, or beyond the reach of the parental arm; or in raising up friends and protectors for the helpless, destitute babe, whom father and mother have forsaken, has been gratefully observed and recorded by many pious individuals and families: perhaps few families are without some such record. Children, thus mercifully preserved and cared for, ought to be peculiarly devoted to the God of their mercies; and the lives thus rescued from danger should be employed in showing forth his praise. Such was eminently the case with the rescued Hebrew infant.

When the compassion of the Egyptian princess was providentially excited by the beauty, the tears, and the sad condition of the babe, and she seemed inclined to devise means for his preservation, Miriam, his sister, who was anxiously watching the progress of affairs, came forward, and proposed to seek for the babe a nurse from

among the Hebrew women. To this the princess assented, and Miriam promptly introduced the mother herself. It was well that the princess possessed not the discernment of Solomon; for surely the rapture of maternal tenderness, and the indications of infantine delight, must, on this interesting occasion, have betrayed themselves. No suspicion, however, was excited in the mind of the princess, and Moses was committed to the care of his own mother, who prosecuted the delightful duty no longer at the hazard of her life, but in full security, and with the promise of a princely reward: "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." A similar charge is addressed to every parent, and it is at once a stimulus and an encouragement to the discharge of parental duties. "This invaluable trust is committed to me by God, the great Parent of all. To him I am responsible for my fidelity; in his approbation I expect my reward. Beside this, who can tell in how great a degree the temporal and everlasting welfare of my child may be influenced by my fidelity or my negligence? Who can tell how vast the honour that awaits me, as having trained in the paths of virtue and piety one who shall become the benefactor of his species; perhaps the able and faithful minister, who shall be instrumental in turning many to righteousness, and shall shine as a star in the firmament for ever and ever? The very possibility of such an honour may well sustain me under the fatigues and anxieties of tending his infant days, and inspire me with diligence, tenderness, and perseverance

in the higher duties of instructing his mind and forming his habits. Yes ; I will take this child, and nurse it *for God*, and rely on his bounty for an abundant reward."

The conduct of Miriam affords a useful hint to the elder children of large families, who should be dutifully willing to share with their parents the pleasing, though arduous task of caring for the younger branches of the family. Miriam is not the only elder sister who has had reason to exult in the recollection, that one who lived to do worthily, and be famous in his generation, was in infancy carried in her arms, or received his first lessons from her lips.

We are not informed how long Moses was continued under the care of his mother ; sufficiently long, however, for her to have imbued his mind with correct sentiments and holy principles. She had taught him the fear of the Lord. She had convinced him that the oppressed and persecuted Hebrews were the servants of God, and under his especial care and favour ; and that it was better to share with them in all their afflictions, than to obtain the highest worldly honours without His blessing, or to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. These principles, thus early planted by her tender maternal diligence and care, under the Divine blessing, took deep root in the heart of the little Hebrew. They grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. They influenced him to decline the offered honour of being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. They induced him to sympathize with the woes

of his suffering brethren, and cast in his lot with them ; to turn his back on all the treasures of Egypt ; to submit contentedly to exile and privation, and afterwards to encounter difficulties and face dangers ; and, through all, to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." Happy parents, whose pious endeavours were thus eminently blessed ! Happy youth, thus trained in the way in which he should go, and even to old age preserved from forsaking it. Let mothers be encouraged to attempt at fixing early impressions on the tender minds of their offspring. It is certain that they may be very early received, perhaps much earlier than is usually supposed ; and a wise and pious parent will not venture to delay her beneficial endeavours, from a consideration of the uncertainty how long she may be permitted to exercise them, and of the certainty that her child is, alas ! too susceptible of impressions of an opposite nature, which the enemy of souls is ever on the alert to make.

The conduct of Moses's mother, in the character of a hired nurse, conveys a hint to persons in that capacity. For their fidelity, watchfulness, and tenderness towards their infant charge, they are responsible both to God and to their employers ; but let them not suppose their obligations are confined to the body. They have unavoidable access to the infant mind, and for this also they are responsible. If they pollute it by impure or profane language, by corrupt sentiments, or by vicious example, they must expect to stand at the bar of God, charged with the ruin of souls ! But if, on the other hand, they improve

their influence over the infant mind, by imbuing it with amiable dispositions and correct sentiments, by impressing on it the sacred truths of Scripture, and by setting before it a holy example, they may hope that these early seeds will be watered with heavenly grace, and spring up to the glory of God, to the honour and happiness of their tender charge, to the good of society, and to their own eternal joy and rejoicing, Exod ii. ; Acts vii. 17—22 ; Heb. xi. 23—27.

Passing by the other circumstances of Moses's history, we proceed to notice those connected with his own family. When Moses had attained the age of eighty years, an interesting family scene ensued. He had been forty years an exile in the land of Midian, and was now miraculously called by Jehovah to go forth as the deliverer of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. Moses humbly shrank from the honour designed him ; indeed, he carried his modesty to the verge of sinful diffidence, in pleading his general insufficiency, and his particular infirmity of a slow speech or stammering tongue. In addition to the gracious assurance of Divine assistance, Jehovah was pleased so far to condescend to the weakness of his servant, as to appoint Aaron, his brother, who was remarkably eloquent, to accompany him as his spokesman. Accordingly, the same Divine voice that bade Moses go to Egypt, directed Aaron to come forth towards Midian, and meet his brother. They met on the mount of God, and embraced each other with cordial and joyful affection, after a separation of forty years. They mutually communicated the

Divine dealings with each, and they went forth delightfully associated to the exercise of their great commission. The gifts of God are variously dispensed ; perhaps, among other wise reasons, that we may be continually reminded of our need of each other, and be led to a willing subservience to the good of all. The greatest have some defect to keep them humble, and the meanest some talent, which, if improved, may render them useful. Moses was wise and mighty, but he was not eloquent. Aaron, though inferior to Moses, possessed the talent he wanted, and their combined powers completely fitted them, under God, for the accomplishment of their embassy. Aaron, though the elder, discovered no jealousy at the superior endowments of his younger brother, or at being required to act in subserviency to him ; but was willing to accommodate himself to the Divine dispensations without murmuring and disputing : " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ;" the strength, the ingenuity, the wisdom, the eloquence of each becoming as the common property of the family, employed for the general advantage, and for the advancement of the Divine designs. Happy families, thus united in the bonds of holy love ! If aught of happiness can be enjoyed on earth, it is surely found in your habitations, and there too is seen a lovely resemblance of the family of heaven, with which you hope one day to blend, Exod. iv. 10—17, 27—30.

In Exod. xv. we find Moses, Aaron, and Miriam uniting and leading the devotions of Israel,

in a song of grateful praise for extraordinary mercies experienced. It is pleasing to see whole families thus uniting in the worship of God and the instruction of men. *Exod. xviii.* records another pleasant family meeting. Moses, on his return to Egypt, left his wife Zipporah, and his two sons, under the care of her father Jethro. It was well that they were willing to separate, when an extraordinary call of duty rendered it expedient; but it was desirable that as soon as possible they should be brought together again. Accordingly, when Jethro heard of the wonders that God had wrought in rescuing Israel from the hand of Egypt, and in providing for their supplies in the wilderness, and that they were now encamped before Sinai, he brought his daughter and her children to Moses, and piously congratulated him on all the Divine interpositions on behalf of Israel. Moses received his father-in-law with affectionate respect; they mutually spake of the dealings of God towards them, and united in a sacrifice of thanksgiving. It is both pleasing and profitable when family meetings are thus sanctified and sweetened by prayer and praise. They then ate bread before God; this was most probably the manna with which Israel was at that time supplied. It is delightful, in our common mercies, to see and acknowledge the hand of God, and to enjoy them as in his sight, soberly, thankfully, moderately; with hearts right in his sight, and with conversation tending to his glory and our mutual profit. We may then eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart, and rejoice in

the hope that God accepteth our work. Jethro gave to Moses prudent counsel respecting the management of public affairs; and Moses, though divinely commissioned and empowered, was not too proud to receive the suggestions of age and experience with respect and consideration. The youth who disregards the counsel and experience of his older and wiser friends, deserves, and is very likely to purchase experience for himself at a dear rate. Jethro's counsel was given and received in a spirit of piety: "If," said he, "thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so." The best human advice should be, will be, in subserviency and submission to the word and providence of God; and those who seek the advice of pious and judicious friends, and at the same time consult the holy oracles of God, and commit themselves to Him in humble prayer, acknowledging him in his appointed ways, may expect that he will direct their steps.

When Jethro, or Raguel, returned to his own country, it appears that he left behind him his son Hobab. We have a pleasing instance of pious kindness, in the endeavours of Moses to persuade him to cast in his lot with the people of Israel. "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Hobab at first hesitated, but afterwards, on Moses urging not only his own interest but his serviceableness to the people, he was induced to comply, and we find that his

family inherited a lot in Canaan, Numb. x. 29—32; Judg. i. 16. We ought to improve the influence of relative affection for the best interests of those we love, and we should use every argument and inducement to persuade those who are connected with us by the bonds of nature, to cast in their lot with us for an interest in the covenant of grace. Happy he who shall be the means of persuading a brother, or sister, or relative, to become a decided follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an inhabitant of the better land of promise. "He that winneth souls is wise," Prov. xi. 30.

We observe with regret, that some unpleasant jealousies and evil-speakings arose between Miriam and Aaron against Moses, on account of his Ethiopian wife. In this matter Moses discovered the greatest meekness; when reviled, not reviling again, but committing his cause to Him who judgeth righteously. It pleased the Lord signally to vindicate his cause, and to punish the offenders. Miriam, who appears to have been first and chief in the transgression, was struck with a leprosy, from which, however, she was restored at the intercession of her injured brother: and though Aaron was spared a similar infliction, he could not but share her disgrace, and, in his official capacity, was obliged to pronounce the sentence of her exclusion from the camp, Numb. xii. 1—15. On this painful transaction we may observe, 1. No perfection dwells on earth. The most happy and harmonious families are liable to some unexpected dis-

turbance. Hence we should be constantly on our guard against giving or taking offence, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 2. There is a special danger of family harmony being interrupted, by coolness or unkind reflections on relations introduced into the family by marriage. Hence a special guard is necessary in this respect. Before such a connexion is formed, kind and prudent advice and caution may be properly suggested; but when an individual is once admitted into the family, duty and interest, as well as Christian politeness, require us to cultivate every respectful and kindly feeling, to overlook imperfections, and to manifest an affectionate desire to serve and please. 3. When offences arise, it is the part of wisdom and piety to be meek and patient in bearing, and slow in resenting them. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 30. For such conduct Moses is celebrated through all ages as the meekest man on the face of the earth, and God himself became his avenger. It is honourable, it is even godlike, when the injured party is the first to make advances towards a reconciliation, and becomes the intercessor for the injurious. 4. Family unkindness, especially malignant speaking, is too little thought of as offences against God; but the case of Miriam teaches us that they are so regarded in his sight. It also seems to intimate, that the indulgence of malevolent passions, and contentious language, renders an individual as deformed and loathsome, and unfit for society,

as the leprosy with which Miriam's misconduct was chastised.

These are the chief particulars of the family history under consideration. The brothers continued mutual helpers in the work of God; on the whole, steadfast, devoted, and unanimous, though not free from great and grievous imperfections and manifestations of unbelief, for one of which they were interdicted from entering the promised land. They, however, all in succession died in peace, greatly honoured and lamented by Israel, and entered on that heavenly inheritance of which the earthly Canaan was but a type. May we be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 12.

AIMS AT USEFULNESS ENCOURAGED.

I.—GOOD BOOKS AT AN INN.

AT an inn, on the western road, in every sitting room is laid some book of an attractive as well as useful kind: pointed anecdotes, or interesting narratives, or pleasing illustrations of Scripture. The passing stranger, who perhaps merely stays a few minutes to change horses, naturally opens a book laid in his way, and perhaps his eye is struck with some sentiment that fastens on his heart. He is led to inquire, and to find the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. Such happy results have, under the Divine blessing, crowned the well-meant endeavour; and

there is abundant encouragement to persevere, and to try again in every mode of usefulness that may present itself.

II.—THE BIBLE IN THE BED-CHAMBER.

SOME individuals in the family of an inn-keeper were awakened to earnest concern for the welfare of their immortal souls, and were enabled to derive instruction and consolation from the Bible. As a natural consequence, they became concerned for the souls of others, and desirous of leading them also to peruse the sacred volume. It was soon suggested to their minds, that an easy and unostentatious mode of presenting it to the notice of many individuals, was to place a Bible in each of the bed-chambers. To this the master of the inn, with some hesitation, consented. Next morning, when several commercial gentlemen met at breakfast in the travellers' room, each observed to the rest, as a very singular circumstance, that he had found a Bible in his bed-room. As the same circumstance had occurred in so many instances, it could not be ascribed to mere accident. After some conversation among themselves, they agreed to call in the landlord. One of them addressed him:—"Mr. —, are you aware of a Bible being placed in each of our bed-rooms?" He replied in the affirmative. "What," rejoined one of the travellers, "did you think we were such a wicked, careless set of fellows, that we should never think of furnishing ourselves with Bibles?" The landlord was proceeding to apologize, and to assure the gentlemen that no offence

was intended, when he was again interrupted, with an assurance that no offence was taken, but, on the contrary, that they all felt themselves much obliged to him, and had called him in to express their thanks for his kind consideration; adding, that it must be acknowledged they were all far too apt to neglect such matters, and that they hoped the Bible, thus laid in their way, might be useful in calling them to attend to their duty. Whether any instances of saving benefit may have arisen from these efforts, time perhaps may develope; if not, "the day shall declare it."

III.—ANECDOTE OF THE LATE REV. J. RYLAND.

THE late Rev. John Ryland, of Northampton, being on a journey, was overtaken by a violent storm, and compelled to take shelter in the first inn he came to. The people of the house treated him with great kindness and hospitality. They would fain have showed him into a parlour, but being wet and cold, he begged permission rather to take a seat by the fireside with the family. The good old man was friendly, cheerful, and well-stored with entertaining anecdotes; and the family did their utmost to make him comfortable: they all supped together, and both the residents and the guest seemed mutually pleased with each other. At length, when the house was cleared, and the hour of rest approached, the stranger appeared uneasy, and looked up every time a door opened, as if expecting the appearance of something essential to his comfort. His host informed him that his chamber was

prepared whenever he chose to retire. "But," said he, "you have not had your family together." "Had my family together! for what purpose? I do not know what you mean," said the landlord. "To read the Scriptures, and pray with them," replied the guest: "surely, you do not retire to rest in the omission of so necessary a duty!" The landlord confessed that he had never thought of doing such a thing. "Then, sir," said Mr. R., "I must beg you to order my horse immediately." The landlord and family entreated him not to expose himself to the inclemency of the weather at that late hour of the night; observing, that the storm was as violent as when he first came in. "May be so," replied Mr. R.; "but I had rather brave the storm than venture to sleep in a house where there is no prayer. Who can tell what may befall us before morning? No, sir, I dare not stay." The landlord still remonstrated, and expressing great regret that he should offend so agreeable a gentleman, at last said, he should have no objection to "call his family together," but he should not know what to do when they came. Mr. R. then proposed to conduct family worship, to which all readily consented. The family was immediately assembled, and then Mr. R. called for a Bible; but no such book could be produced. However, he was enabled to supply the deficiency, as he always carried a small Bible or Testament in his pocket. He read a portion of Scripture, and then prayed with much fervour and solemnity, especially acknowledging the preserving goodness of God,

that none present had been struck dead by the storm, and imploring protection through the night. He earnestly prayed that the attention of all might be awakened to the things belonging to their everlasting peace, and that the family might never again meet in the morning, or separate at night, without prayer. When he rose from his knees, almost every individual present was bathed in tears, and the inquiry was awakened in several hearts, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?" Much interesting and profitable conversation ensued. The following morning, Mr. R. again conducted family worship, and obtained from the landlord a promise, that however feebly performed, it should in future be no more omitted. This day was indeed the beginning of days to that family; most, if not all of them, became decided and devoted followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and were the means of diffusing a knowledge of the gospel in a neighbourhood which had before been considered dark and destitute. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" Prov. xvi. 23. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," Eccl. xi. 6.

IV.—ANECDOTE OF THE LATE REV. J. COOKE.

THE late Rev. John Cooke happened some years ago to be at an inn at Reading, in the same room with a gay, dashing young gentleman, who invited him to join him in a glass of spirits and

water, which Mr. C. declined, saying he was not thirsty. "What," said the stranger, "do you never drink but when you are thirsty?" "Very seldom," replied Mr. C.—"Then," rejoined the other, "you are as bad as a brute." "And do you, sir, drink when you are not thirsty?"—"Oh, yes, very often." "Then, sir, you are worse than a brute, for a brute never drinks except to satisfy his thirst."—"Well, well, we will not argue about that; but, come, I suppose you are one of the cloth, tell me which is the way to heaven? but, I must have it in three sentences." "Sir," replied Mr. C., "I wish you had asked me that question in a serious spirit: it is a serious and important question; and however you proposed it, it is my duty to answer it seriously. You have confined me to three sentences. I must, therefore, briefly mention what the word of God declares necessary to our going to heaven.

"1. *Repentance*.—Repentance consists in sorrow for sin, hatred against it, and forsaking of it; and 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,' Luke xiii. 3.

"2. *Faith*.—Faith includes a belief of God's word, reliance on his promises, and subjection to his authority; and 'he that believeth not shall be damned,' Mark xvi. 16.

"3. *Love*.—Love implies a knowledge of God, communion with Him, and conformity to Him; and 'if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord shall come,' 1 Cor. xvi. 22."

The gentleman made no reply, but immediately quitted the room.

Some time afterwards, Mr. C. was walking in his garden by the road side, when a gentleman riding by, observing him, suddenly checked his horse, drew up, and asked, "Did I not see you, sir, on such a day, at the Bear Inn, at Reading?" "It is possible you might," replied Mr. C., and fixing his eyes upon him, added, "Yes, sir, I believe you did." The gentleman grasped Mr. C.'s hand, and said with great solemnity, "I shall never forget that interview." He then rode off, and Mr. C. never saw or heard any more of him afterwards. How forcible are right words! and how desirable is it that Christians should improve even occasional and transient opportunities of dropping a word, fitly spoken, that may be fixed as a nail in a sure place, and though perhaps they may never again meet the individual on earth, the results of which may gladden their souls in eternity.

V.—REACTION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

AN amiable child, belonging to a Sunday school at B—, died after a lingering illness. Her conduct, both in the school and at home, had long been such as to induce a hope that religious instruction had not been bestowed on her in vain; and, during her illness, she was enabled to manifest not merely resignation and patience under suffering, and a willingness to leave the world, but such high degrees of joy and peace in believing, as were truly astonishing and delightful to the minister and Christian friends who visited her. She expressed the liveliest gratitude for the benefits of a Sunday school education, and mention-

ed most affectionately the teacher under whose instructions she was led to see the things that belonged to her everlasting peace.

Some months after this dear child had been removed to the general assembly and church of the first-born above, that very teacher applied for admission to the church of God below, and stated that her first experimental acquaintance with the truths of the gospel arose from witnessing their blessed effects in the dying consolations of the child whom she had herself instructed. Thus was Divine truth, like mercy, "twice blessed—blessed in her who gives and her who takes."

VI.—INTERESTING FACT:

RELATED BY THE REV. N. M. H.

MANY years ago, the only child of thoughtless parents attended a Sunday school in London. It does not appear that, at this school, any particular pains had been taken to impress on the mind of the child the distinguishing truths of the gospel, or the importance of personal application; yet, in a general way, she had been taught to read the Scriptures, and to regard the sabbath. One sabbath day, the mother overpersuaded the little girl, indeed almost compelled her against her will, to absent herself from her school, and to accompany her in a walk. The child discovered great uneasiness, and repeatedly wished herself in her school. At length, in passing through or near Whitechapel, they heard a congregation singing, and the little girl earnestly entreated her mother to go into the place of worship where

they were assembled. They did so, and heard, apparently for the first time in their lives, a plain gospel sermon. The mother but little regarded it; she had gone in merely in compliance with the importunity of the child, and no particular interest was excited in her mind; but the word spoken was deeply impressed on that of the child. She repeatedly gave utterance to her feelings, "O, mother, did you ever hear any thing like that!"

In the course of the week, the child was taken ill; after some days, or weeks, of acute disease, the complaint settled in her hip or back, and she was wasted away by consumption. She was never again able to walk, but lingered for more than two years. Her ungodly father would never permit the visits of any pious friends: and, indeed, this interesting case seems scarcely to have been brought to the notice of any who would have been likely to administer suitable instruction and consolation. But the Lord was, in an especial manner, the Teacher of this poor child. That one sermon and the New Testament were the only outward means employed: of the former she retained a most vivid recollection, and the latter was the constant companion of her couch. The sermon served to illustrate and direct into the meaning and application of Scripture; and Scripture confirmed the great and glorious truths which she had heard from human lips, but which she was enabled to trace to their precious source, the volume of inspiration under the Holy Spirit's influence. She appropriated the promises of the gospel, and found joy and

peace in believing. Her sick chamber was the scene of holy communion with God, and it proved "the gate of heaven" to her immortal spirit.

The dying experience of the child made an impression on the heart of the mother, which was never entirely obliterated, though her circumstances were very unfavourable to its being acted out. Now and then, she had an opportunity of attending a place of worship, which just served to keep alive or renew her recollections; but her husband was totally worldly-minded and opposed to religion, and her own impressions were not yet deep enough to produce any thing like decision. At length, she was left a widow; trouble, perhaps, was made the means of deepening and renewing her former convictions, and being now at her own disposal, she regularly attended the preaching of the gospel, which proved to her, as it had been to her dying child, the power of God unto salvation. About sixteen years after her attention was first directed to religious things, she became an avowed and consistent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who can tell what blessed fruits may yet arise from seed that has long lain dormant? .

VII.—ANECDOTE OF THE REV. W. KINGSBURY.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days," Eccl. xi. 1.

AT Southampton, the labours of the late venerable William Kingsbury had been eminently owned and blessed by God, in the conversion of sinners, and the building up of the church; but

as the infirmities of age advanced upon him, he was sometimes discouraged at not beholding such frequent and evident instances of usefulness as he had enjoyed in the vigour of his days.

In the month of July, 1807, Mr. Kingsbury preached from the words, "I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge," Psa. lxxi. 7. He stated, that on that day he attained his seventy-third year, and had been led to this subject by reflecting on the vicissitudes through which he had been brought, and the experience he had had of the Divine mercy and faithfulness through his long life. He very feelingly alluded to some discouragements in his ministry, and observed that there was no trial so severe to him as the thought of outliving his usefulness.

On the evening of the same day, the writer of these lines accompanied Mr. Kingsbury in the carriage of a relative to her residence, two or three miles from Southampton, where he was accustomed to preach on Lord's day evenings. There appeared on his countenance an unusual expression of mingled thoughtfulness and cheerfulness. At length he broke the silence, by exclaiming, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." He then related the

following circumstance, his utterance being frequently interrupted by tears of gratitude and pleasure;—After the morning service, a respectable-looking elderly woman had come into the vestry, and requested to speak to Mr. Kingsbury. Being introduced, she said, she felt it her duty to take the first opportunity of meeting with him, to state that his ministry had been greatly blessed to her soul, and she hoped to praise God for it to all eternity. Mr. K. observed, that she was quite a stranger to him; he did not recollect ever having seen her before; and asked her where she resided, and how long she had attended his ministry. She replied, that she was a total stranger; having only heard him preach once before, and that, more than forty years ago, when she resided at Poole, in Dorsetshire. She was, at that time, young, gay, and thoughtless; and on the point of forming a matrimonial connexion with a young man of similar character. According to their usual custom, they set out for a Sunday stroll, and having heard that a stranger was preaching, dropped in out of mere curiosity. The preacher was Mr. Kingsbury. It pleased Almighty God to carry home the word with power to the heart of the young woman: she returned home—no longer the giddy, thoughtless lover of pleasure, but deeply concerned to know what she should do to be saved. Her concern could not escape the notice of her companion, who endeavoured to turn the matter into ridicule; but “the King’s arrow was sharp in her heart;” she could not forget the wound it had inflicted, nor could she find

ease until relieved by the application of the "blood of sprinkling." The whole bias of her mind and pursuits now assumed a different direction; the pleasures of the world had no more charms for her; she would no longer idle away the precious hours of the sabbath; she desired to hold communion with God in his house and ordinances. Under these circumstances, it very naturally occurred to her, "How can I make happy, or be happy with a partner in life, whose views and feelings on the most important of all subjects are the very opposite to my own?" She pursued the inquiry with fervent prayer for Divine direction and guidance, and came to the conclusion candidly to state to her lover the change of which she had become the subject; and though she felt herself bound in honour to fulfil her engagements to him, to appeal to him whether the difference was not likely to be a source of more lasting unhappiness between them, than an honourable dissolution of present engagements by mutual consent. The young man admitted the force of her reasoning; he said he was certain he should never imbibe her religious views, and he feared that he should be little inclined to tolerate them; they therefore agreed on a friendly separation. Feeling uncomfortable at residing in the same town with her late companion, and where their intimacy was generally known, she gladly embraced an opportunity which offered, of engaging herself to reside with a pious family in the very north of England. There she became acquainted with, and was in due time married to one

who feared God; with whom she had ever since lived in great domestic happiness, and had brought up a family of eight children, every one of whom she had the happiness of seeing walking in the ways of God, and two, or more, filling stations of distinguished usefulness in the Christian church. One of the sons had just returned from abroad in ill health, and was at an hospital near Portsmouth. This had occasioned the mother's journey to conduct him home; and being in the neighbourhood, she gladly embraced the opportunity of hearing and introducing herself to the minister to whom she felt indebted, under God, in everlasting obligations. Her son, she feared, was in a very precarious state of health; "But," said she, "I have good evidence that he is safe for time and for eternity. Oh, how different are my circumstances and prospects from what they would have been, if I had continued unconcerned about my own soul, or even had married an ungodly man, and become the mother of an ungodly, or, at best, a divided family!"

"This delightful disclosure," said the good man, with tears in his eyes, "seems to renew my youth like the eagle's. My Lord has kept the good wine of consolation for the hour of debility and need. Bless the Lord, O my soul! I am indeed as a wonder unto many; but THOU art my strong refuge, and there the wonder ceases!"

VIII.—SALVATION TO THE UTMOST.

THE late Rev. Andrew Fuller, on his second

'visit to Scotland, received many pleasing testimonies to the usefulness that had crowned his former ministry there. Among others, a poor, but decent-looking woman presented herself, and, offering a mite towards the good cause for which he was collecting, expressed the warmest gratitude—a gratitude which she hoped to feel through all eternity, for having been directed to hear the gospel from his lips. With many tears she confessed, that she had been one of the most notoriously vile characters in the neighbourhood, and felt herself so utterly depraved and degraded, as to be altogether beyond the reach of recovery. She was miserable in her sins, yet neither hoped nor desired to be delivered from them. She said in her heart, "There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go," Jer. ii. 25. Seeing a number of persons thronging the doors of a chapel, her curiosity was awakened; she was informed that an Englishman was going to preach; she mingled with the crowd, and entered the place. Mr. Fuller took for his text, Isa. xlv. 22, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "What, then," she exclaimed in her heart, "surely there is hope even for me; wretch as I am, I am not beyond the ends of the earth!" She listened with eager delight while the good man proclaimed the free salvation of the gospel. Hope sprung up in her heart—a hope which purified as well as comforted; and the grace of God taught her to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Titus ii. 12.

IX.—ENCOURAGING INSTANCE OF USEFULNESS.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," Eccles. xi. 6.

A PIOUS and benevolent gentleman, accustomed to attempt the good of his neighbours by various means, such as distributing tracts, visiting the sick and poor in their cottages, providing the means of instruction for poor children, reading sermons in destitute villages, etc.—had the happiness of witnessing decided good effects resulting from his benevolent efforts. Among others, the following pleasing instance deserves to be recorded:—A poor woman expressed great concern and anxiety at her husband's total neglect of public worship, and begged Mr. — to remonstrate with him on the subject. He accordingly took an opportunity of calling; read one or two of the well-known tracts on the observance of the Lord's day, and persuasives to public worship; and farther pointed out to him the sin and danger of neglecting these sacred duties. The man appeared to be somewhat impressed by what he had heard; but on being appealed to, whether he would attend public worship in future, he excused himself, by saying he had not a decent coat in which to appear. Having exposed the folly of this plea, the gentleman added, "Well, that shall not be your hindrance: I will give you a coat, on condition of your engaging regularly to attend public worship on the Lord's day." "Thank you, sir," replied the man; "but I

cannot do it: I am liable to the rheumatism in my head, and cannot sit uncovered." This difficulty was also met by his being furnished with a Welsh wig. He could not for shame raise any more objections, and somewhat reluctantly engaged to attend, though probably with little intention of persevering in the practice, and with still less idea of the value of those privileges he had so long slighted. But it pleased Almighty God to arouse his careless heart, and to fix his attention on the things belonging to his everlasting peace. It was now no longer necessary to urge his attendance at the sanctuary. He was never absent, whenever the doors were opened. After many months of serious inquiry, and a decided change of character, he expressed his wish to become an avowed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and was accordingly admitted a member of the Christian church, with which he worshipped, and where he now adorns the doctrine of God his Saviour.

Though a very subordinate consideration, it is worthy of notice, that religion has discovered its beneficial effects on the concerns of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. The family, long noticed for its mean and shabby appearance, and its frequent straits and difficulties, is now as much remarked for its decency, respectability, and credit,

X.—THE BEGINNING OF A GOOD WORK.

IT is well for the speech to be always with grace, seasoned with the salt of wisdom and piety, that it may minister grace to those that

hear it. On some occasions, truly pious converse has been made a blessing not only to those to whom it was immediately addressed, but also to those who have accidentally heard it. More than fifty years ago, the late Rev. W. B. Cado-gan, an excellent clergyman at Reading, having been informed that a lady in that town was a pious character, wished to cultivate her acquaintance, and took an opportunity of calling at her house. On being introduced to the room where the lady was sitting, Mr. C. apologized for his intrusion as a stranger; but, hoping that he had the happiness of addressing one who was a child of God and a sister in Christ Jesus, he anticipated both pleasure and profit from mutual intercourse. These words excited the attention, and fastened on the heart of the servant who had shown Mr. C. into the room. She went back wondering what these things meant—"a child of God, a sister in Christ Jesus." She was led anxiously to inquire, "Am I a child of God? or is there any possibility of my becoming so?" She retired to her chamber, and for the first time in her life poured out her heart in humble prayer that she might be taught what at present she but little understood, and might become the character which she began to consider so honourable and desirable. It is pleasing to add, that her impressions proved abiding, and her path, like the shining light, shone more and more unto the perfect day. She lived to extreme old age; and, amidst all the feebleness and languor of dissolving nature, was enabled to triumph in the faithfulness of God, the Rock of

her salvation. Who can tell what good may arise, under the blessing of God, from a single expression? On the other hand, how carefully should we avoid any light, or unprofitable, or uncharitable expression, by which the mind of an accidental hearer may be injured, and led to think unfavourably of the religion we profess.

XI.—A HAPPY EXPEDIENT.

A MINISTER in the country had been pleading with his congregation the claims of the poor heathen on Christian benevolence; and strongly urged on them the duty of contributing to the support of missionary exertions. His friends readily contributed according to their several abilities. The next year, when the missionary collection was about to be made, the minister received a one pound note from a poor labouring man, with a statement to the following effect:—“Sir, when you preached the missionary sermon last year, I was grieved that I had it not in my power to give what I wished. I thought and thought, and consulted my wife whether there was any thing in which we could spare without stinting the poor children; but it seemed that we lived as near as possible in every respect. At last it came into my mind, ‘Is that fourpence which goes every week for an ounce of tobacco absolutely necessary?’ I had been used to it so long that I scarcely thought it possible to do without it; however, I resolved to try; so, instead of spending the fourpence, I dropped it into a box. The first week I felt it sorely, but the second week it was easier; and, in the course of

a few weeks, it was little or no sacrifice at all ; at least, I can say, that the pleasure far outweighed the sacrifice. When my children found what was doing, they wished to contribute also ; and if ever they got a penny or halfpenny given them for their own pleasure, it was sure to find its way into the box, instead of the cake shop. On opening the box, I have the pleasure to find that our collected pence amount to one pound ; which I now enclose, and pray that the Lord may give his blessing with it. I am thankful for having thus broken a nasty and an expensive habit ; and I have enjoyed more health and cheerfulness since I left off that which I once thought it was impossible for me to do without."

EVENING XIII.



THE AFFLICTED FAMILY.

A Sketch from Scripture.

THE sacred history introduces to our notice the patriarch Job under circumstances of as great prosperity as ever fell to the lot of man. He dwelt in the land of Uz, where he was a man of high distinction, or, as some have supposed, a prince. His substance was very great, according to the simplicity of early times, consisting in vast herds and flocks, and the great extent of land necessary for their support. He possessed "seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household : so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." On hearing this statement read, an ignorant person observed, "Job must indeed have been a good man, and in great favour with God, that he should have been permitted to acquire such wealth." A most ignorant and mistaken notion indeed ! Worldly circumstances are no proof whatever of the Divine favour or displeasure. The wicked are sometimes permit-

ted to have all their hearts can wish ; and the righteous are sometimes exercised with deep poverty and severe affliction. Character is evidenced, not by outward circumstances, but by our disposition and behaviour under them ; and we must wait for the light of eternity, before we judge of the favour of God towards any individual by the circumstances in which he is placed. Had the individual above referred to, read a little farther into Job's history, he would have fallen into the same mistake with his friends, who, having honoured him for his prosperity, despised and reproached him for his subsequent adversity. Job, however, *was* a good man ; eminently so. He set the Lord always before him, and hated every evil. Hence his worldly prosperity came as a blessing, and he was enabled really to enjoy, and rightly to improve it. When prosperity hardens the heart, and makes a man forgetful of God, and oppressive to his fellow creatures, it becomes a snare and a curse to him ; but when, as in the case of Job, it is acknowledged as the gift of God, and is enjoyed and laid out for his honour, and the good of mankind, then, and then alone, enlarged possessions become truly valuable and beneficial. By his pious and judicious application of his wealth and influence, Job secured the respect and gratitude of those around him. He fed the hungry, clothed the naked, relieved the oppressed, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. Hence, wherever he came, he was treated with that reverence and honour which virtue alone can command.

Nor was Job's prosperity confined to wealth and honour : he was also blessed in his family relations. His numerous family grew up around him, healthy and promising. By degrees they left the parental roof, and settled in life for themselves. Their father had the means of liberally supplying them for their outset, and had the pleasure of seeing them all settled so near home, as to admit of continual intercourse, and so affectionately disposed, as to incline them often to enjoy it. A united family, especially if it be a religious family, is one of the loveliest sights on earth, and especially gratifying to the heart of a pious and affectionate parent. Job had evidently given his children a pious education ; and, even after they were settled in life, he continued to use his parental influence for the promotion of piety amongst them. On one occasion, especially, it is observed that a social family meeting having been held in each of his sons' dwellings, Job was jealous over them with a godly jealousy, lest their mirth should have risen to excess ; or lest, in the enjoyments of life, they had forgotten God, the great Author of all. He, therefore, summoned them all to a special sacrifice ; designing both to implore pardon for any special guilt, and also to recall their minds to a deeper sense of the value and obligations of religion. Such was his habitual practice. And he was not only constant in the duties of piety, but happy in its enjoyments. The candle of the Lord shone on his tabernacle ; and he was favoured with intimate and delightful communion with God.

What a highly favoured lot was that of Job ! Established in wealth, honour, and family enjoyments ; having favour both with God and man ; what more on earth could Job desire ? Nothing, except the continuance of his enjoyments. His fondest hope for time was, that he might die in his nest ; that all things around him might continue as they were, until it should please the Author of his being to remove him to the nobler enjoyments of eternity. Well has the poet said,

“ A perpetuity of bliss *is* bliss.”

The highest pleasures of earth cannot be perfect, because there is a possibility—a certainty of their termination. It is only the things which are not seen that are eternal. Though Job’s mountain of prosperity seemed to stand so strong, it was suddenly and awfully removed.

The affecting reverse in Job’s circumstances, which we have now to contemplate, is ascribed, in a great measure, to satanic influence. We are not aware how large a share this cruel adversary may have in our trials, both as to mental feelings and outward circumstances ; but of this we may rest assured, that if we are indeed the servants of God, and commit our cause into his hands, he is infinitely greater than our spiritual adversary ; and will not permit us to be exercised with any trial but what he will sustain us under, and overrule for his own glory, and the ultimate defeat of our cruel foe. Satan discovered the most cruel and bitter malignity against Job. He hated his holiness, and envied

his prosperity; and, because he could find nothing bad in itself to charge him with, he accused him of selfishness and hypocritical motives in doing good. Let the base maligner of a godly man's motives remember under whose banner he enlists himself: Satan is the grand accuser of the brethren.

But what encouragement we have in observing, from the enemy's own admission, that, with all his malice against the servant of God, he had no power against him! "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Yes; Divine grace had made a hedge round his soul, and Divine providence round his person and possessions; and though Satan had often gone round and round, he could find no gap; nor dared he remove a single stake without permission.

But when Satan insinuated that Job's piety was merely mercenary, and that if there were nothing to be got by serving God, he would be as ready to curse his Maker as he had been to pray to him, it pleased God, for wise, though inscrutable reasons, to permit a severe trial of the sincerity and faith of his servant; and Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, with authority to strip Job of all his worldly possessions, and restricted only from laying hands on his person.

Accordingly, on the day of family festivity—for the malignant enemy spared no circumstance that could, by relation or contrast, infuse an additional drop of bitterness into his cup of affliction—

tion—Job's calamities came suddenly upon him. One messenger came hastily to announce that as the oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, the Sabeans fell upon them, and carried them away, and slew the servants with the edge of the sword. Ere time was allowed to the sufferer to utter a reproach against the injustice and cruelty of these marauders, another messenger arrived, whose heavy tale directed Job to look upwards, and trace his calamities to the hand of God. The fire of God had fallen from heaven, and had burned up the sheep and the shepherds. Very naturally might Job construe this into an expression of the Divine displeasure: that his sheep, with which he used to honour God in sacrifice, should be all taken away at a stroke, as if God would accept no more burnt offerings at his hands. But this was, in fact, a cruel device of Satan to tempt Job to renounce his religion. He who had misrepresented Job as a false servant, now strove to make it appear that God was a hard master, and to persuade Job in despair to admit that it was vain to serve God.

But the heavy burden was not yet exhausted; another messenger approached, to announce that the Chaldeans had made three bands, and driven away three thousand camels, and slain the servants. As long as we are in this world, we can never conclude that we have had our share of affliction, or that the bitter cup has finally passed from us. Often one affliction is only sent to prepare us for another and a heavier. Deep calleth unto deep, and one wave and billow

follow another, and threaten to overwhelm the soul. Happy those whose anchor is cast within the vail !

This part of Job's history affords a striking caution against rashly interpreting any particular calamities as immediate expressions of Divine displeasure. The excellent Matthew Henry well observes, "If the fire of God, which fell upon Job's honest servants, who were in the way of their duty, had fallen upon the Sabeans and Chaldean robbers, who were doing mischief, God's judgments therein would have been, like the great mountains, evident and conspicuous ; but when the way of the wicked prospers, and they carry off their booty, while righteous men are suddenly cut off, God's righteousness is like a great deep, the bottom of which we cannot find."

But the heaviest stroke was yet in reserve. Job was, indeed, stripped of his wealth ; but he might console himself with the thought, that his lovely family were yet spared to him ; and that a pleasure, hitherto unknown, might be found in deriving his daily support from the exertion of their daily industry. Such a descent, if it may be so called, has often been made without interrupting family happiness : or rather, those who have been brought up neither to labour nor care, but have been afterwards thrown on their own resources, have declared that the enjoyment arising from their former abundance bore no comparison with the honest pleasure of finding their hands sufficient for them, and the still higher delight of sensible dependence on their " Father

in heaven," to give them day by day their daily bread. Such alleviations, however, were not in reserve for the family of Job; for to the loss of his worldly property was added the loss of all his ten hopeful children, cut off at one stroke; and the poor bereaved father stood like a tree of the forest, scathed by the lightning of heaven, and stripped at once of its glory and its promise.

But what was the conduct of Job under this accumulated pressure of afflictions? Did he, in an agony of distress, yield to the tempter, and renounce his confidence in God? or did he sink into sullen apathy, and endure, unmoved, those evils which he could not prevent? Neither the one nor the other. He felt as a man, but he bowed and triumphed as a saint; and his faith and submission, thus severely tried, were found unto praise, and honour, and glory: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." What an unspeakable value and reality there must be in true religion, which can thus sustain and quiet the mind under the most afflictive and accumulated strokes! And what a pitiable creature is man, the heir of vicissitude and sorrow, while destitute of this one never-failing prop! We cannot wonder at the sinful, foolish, and desperate expedients sometimes resorted to by men of the world, under the pressure of affliction, to

divert their minds, to drown their sensibilities, or to get rid of their burdens: the wonder is how they are sustained at all, who have no consciousness of interest in Christ.

But shall the Christian's nobler mind,
By grace renewed, by Heaven refined,
Indulge a murmuring thought?
Shall he who claims Jehovah's strength,
Who shall be brought to heaven at length,
Bemoan his present lot?

Forbid it, gracious God! he cries,
Nor let the ungenerous thought arise—
Offspring of discontent.
No; while my God, my Saviour lives,
Thankful I'll take whate'er he gives,
And prize the blessings sent.

Hitherto, Job had been spared personal affliction; and health is an unspeakable blessing, and assists greatly in bearing calamity and trial. The malignant foe, baffled in his former attempts, insinuated that Job's self-possession was no better than mere selfishness; and that while his life and health were preserved he cared little for his relative losses: he therefore desired to make a farther attempt, hoping to ruffle his spirits, and unhinge his mind, by inflicting severe pain and loathsome disease on his body. Mysterious as it may seem, Satan's malicious desire was granted. Job was smitten with sore boils, from the sole of his foot to his crown, so that he became a burden to himself. Yet still he repined not, but sat down among the ashes—not more a picture of accumulated misery than of deep humiliation and submission to the afflicting hand of God. Bereft of his children, and deserted by

the friends of his prosperity, we are ready to inquire, "Was Job permitted to enjoy the solace of a tender and affectionate wife; or had she been removed from him before the commencement of his complicated trials?" She was, indeed, spared to him; but, to crown his misery, she became his tormentor and his tempter, rather than his comforter and counsellor under affliction. She discerned the hand of God in his peculiar and complicated afflictions; but she regarded these dispensations as the strokes of a stern judge, not as the discipline of a wise and gracious parent, who deals correction to his children for their benefit, and never inflicts a stroke, but with a view to correspondent and extensive benefit. Perhaps Job's wife was one of those who thought well of Job, and the religion he professed, and the God he worshipped, just as long as prosperity lasted; but when she saw him in adversity, she directly concluded that religion was a thing of nought. "What are you the better for your religion?" she tauntingly asked him: "will you retain your allegiance to a God who thus afflicts you? Curse God, and die. Wait no longer for deliverance from His hand who seems to have forsaken thee, but be thine own deliverer, by putting an end to thy life and thy troubles together." Alas, that such horrid suggestions should ever be presented to the mind of a saint; and especially that they should be presented by one so near and dear! What need have we constantly to watch and pray, "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!" Happily, Job was strengthened to reject

this temptation with abhorrence. He bore many unkindnesses from the same quarter with composure and mildness; see Job xix. 17: but when she tempted him to renounce his God, he repelled her with holy indignation; "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" A noble instance of the possibility of being angry without sin, by being angry at nothing but sin, and regarding a temptation to sin as the greatest affront that can be offered. How just was Job's reasoning; how becoming the lips of a saint; and how worthy of adoption under every affliction that may befall us! It becomes us to think of the many mercies we have received at the hand of God, and to improve them as an incitement both to gratitude and submission. We should regard them also as pledges and proofs of the good will of God towards us, and as encouraging us to believe that whatever comes from his hand is good, though it may come under a threatening aspect. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Thus far Job affords us an unblemished pattern of patience and meekness under affliction: but the best of men are but men at the best; and the greatest saints have, on some occasions, failed in those very graces for which they were most distinguished; as if to teach us that there is no perfection in man. This eminent saint so far forgot himself under the unparalleled pressure of his sufferings, as to curse the day of his birth, and to wish that he had never had an ex-

istence. But the tempter never so far prevailed against him as to induce him to renounce his religion. We may think it very unaccountable, that a man should adhere to his religion, and entertain any hope of future blessedness, and yet for a moment wish he had never been born : but we are strangers to sufferings so severe as those of Job, and can but ill estimate their pressure and their influence. It becomes us to be moderate in censuring this one failing, especially when we recollect that, although, in other parts of Scripture, repeated and honourable mention is made of Job's piety and patience, his impatience is never once referred to. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," Psa. ciii. 13, 14.

In his calamity Job was visited by three friends from a distance, who came professedly to condole with him; but on witnessing his unparalleled sufferings, and on hearing the bitter exclamations which were wrung from him, these mistaken friends too rashly concluded that he had been guilty of some secret and heinous crimes, for which he was visited by the special displeasure of the Almighty. These cruel suspicions and reproaches were indeed as "vinegar upon nitre," and added heavily to the afflictions of the afflicted. Job, however, was sustained by the inward consciousness of integrity. Happy those who can appeal, from the calumnies and evil surmises of men, to Him who judgeth righteously; who reads the inmost heart, and who acknowledges sincerity, even when surrounded by

unallowed imperfections ! It must not, however, be passed over, that, during the continuance of his afflictions, Job knew the superadded distress arising from the hidings of God's countenance ; and this, to one who had long enjoyed its shining, was the most painful affliction of all. We do not read of such withdrawment till after Job had yielded to discontent ; and sin is more or less connected with all our privations of spiritual enjoyment. However, this finishing circumstance of Job's distress may furnish an additional encouragement to others, who, in the midst of outward trials, experience also gloom and distress of mind. Let them not hastily conclude that the Lord has cast them off for ever ; but rather say, " I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face, and I will look for him."

Dark and gloomy, and long-continued, as was the night of Job's affliction, mercy was still in store for him, and brighter days at length dawned upon him. The Lord "turned again his captivity, as the streams in the south." Again he was blessed with worldly prosperity, honour, family enjoyments, health of body, and cheerfulness of mind. He long enjoyed these blessings on earth, and they were heightened and sanctified by the delightful hope of a portion far better in the heavens. However severe the afflictions with which we may be tried while on earth, we are never beyond the reach of mercy. From the example of Job we are encouraged to keep in mind, that the severest afflictions, so far from being evidences of the Divine displeasure, have been the portion of

the most distinguished saints. However severe our trials, submission and patience are our duty. And since all afflictions are designed for our good, it becomes us to be concerned rather to secure the accomplishment of the end and design of the affliction, than to be eager for its removal. When the end of correction is answered, the tender Father will soon withdraw his strokes. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," (or trial :) "for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life," James i. 12.

COMPOSING CORDIAL FOR A SICK BED.

VISITING the dying chamber of a long-esteemed Christian friend, she told me that she suffered much from extreme restlessness, the common attendant of her complaint. "As long," said she, "as I can remain exactly in the same attitude in which I first lie down, I continue tolerably easy; but if once I change my position, I am instantly in violent pain, and continue tossing to and fro till the dawning of the day. The most successful method I have ever tried to keep me quiet on my bed, is to meditate on the Scriptures. I have sometimes set myself to begin with Genesis, and recollect, as I went on, all the promises of God to his people; but it seemed like an attempt to number the stars, or count the sands on the sea shore. Well, I have thought, what a treasury! all 'exceeding great and precious promises!'—'all yea and amen in Christ Jesus!'

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and all, I trust, for me! The thought has soothed and elevated my mind, and caused me to forget for awhile my pain and restlessness, and perhaps to drop into a refreshing sleep, which medicine has long failed to procure."

Children! what a precious book is the Bible! What a good thing it is to have the memory well stored with its sacred contents! But remember, that is not all; merely remembering the words will not comfort you; you must receive it into your hearts by faith and love; and then you may feed upon it, and find real support and consolation when all earthly things have lost their charm. The word of God had long been to this pious woman the necessary food of her soul, the man of her counsel, the guide of her steps. Her delight was in the law of her God; in his law she had meditated with holy submission and activity through the day of life; and her meditation on it was sweet in the shades of affliction and the night of death. May such be your happy experience and mine.

AFFECTING FAMILY MEMORIALS.

EPITAPH ON A MONUMENT IN SHIELDS CHAPEL,
IN THE COUNTY OF DURHAM.

"To the memory of George Yeoman, of Herton, (in this county,) Esq., who died January 23, 1785, aged 52 years.

"Also of Esther, his daughter, an infant.

"And of Ann, his daughter, who died Nov. 11, 1793, aged 18; cut off by the corroding influence of consumption, just as she was entering

a world in which her beauty, her gentleness, and her accomplishments would have attracted universal esteem.

“Likewise of George, John, and Henry, his sons; who, returning from Quebec, were shipwrecked on the Land’s End, Dec. 17, 1797: George, aged 23; John, 20; Henry, 18 years; which unhappy catastrophe, while it filled their surviving parent with the most poignant sorrow, diffused a gloom over the whole circle of the neighbourhood; for the pleasing expectations which the manhood of George had already confirmed, the less mature years of his brothers promised to fulfil.

“Also to the memory of an afflicted parent’s last remaining hope, Thomas, who died March 19, 1799, aged 18 years.

“This monument, the sad memorial of no common devastation, is consecrated by the widowed wife and childless mother!

“Stranger! if thou hast met with affliction, ponder over the rapid destruction of this once flourishing family, and in contemplating the sorrows of a forlorn mother forget for awhile thine own!

“On the 19th of March, 1803, having borne with the meek and resigned spirit of a Christian, the repeated deprivations of her husband and children, it pleased God to call from this trial of her fortitude and submission, Ann Yeoman, the wife and mother of the above recorded deceased, aged 60 years, by whose death no vestige of the existence of the family remains, save this poor memorial!”

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I HAVE at last received another letter from America, the contents of which have very much dejected me. Peter, my youngest brother, has been visited by the severest shocks of disastrous fate, that can be imagined. The last letter I received from him, dated Christmas, informed me that his wife had been confined a few days, and that the child was dead; but intimated no apprehension of danger for my sister. She however survived but a short time, and was soon followed to the grave by her mother, who could not sustain this double loss. After some months, Peter formed another connexion, with a lady to whom he had been attached previous to his first marriage; a connexion which, my brother John tells me, promised the most perfect and lasting happiness. My three brothers, their wives, and relations and friends, were assembled at a country house, in celebration of this marriage, and had already past three weeks in festivity; when, one night, Peter and his bride were awakened by some sand-flies, (a very troublesome stinging insect,) which had taken refuge in the house from a heavy storm of rain. He reached a thin gauze handkerchief, and threw it over her face, to keep off the flies; and was hardly again settled in bed, when a thunder storm broke over the house, and struck his poor wife dead in his arms! Though there were seventeen persons in the house, and several of them stunned by the violence of the shock, she alone received irreparable injury. Thus this poor fellow, at twenty-three years of

age, has had the cup of happiness twice dashed from his grasp. A deep melancholy has succeeded this last event.

Well has the poet said,

“He builds too low, who builds beneath the skies !”

How affectingly does this melancholy detail exemplify the vanity and uncertainty of all sublunary joys! Wretched is the man, whatever he may possess of wealth, honours, tender connexions, and worldly enjoyments, who cannot say, “Thou art my portion, O God!” And he alone is truly happy, who, whatever sources of enjoyment may be denied or cut off, can say with the prophet, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Nothing can sustain the mind under shocks so severe, or even under the more common calamities of life, like a firm conviction that they are inflicted by the good and steady hand of our God, our Father, and our Friend; who is far more alive to our true interests, than we can be ourselves; who is too kind to inflict one unnecessary pang, or deprive us of one gratification that we may safely enjoy; yet, at the same time, too wise to allow us to retain any enjoyment, however dear, that would prove really injurious; and who has, moreover, promised that he will be with us in trouble; that as our days, so shall our strength be; and that in that brighter and better world, for which all this painful discipline is preparing us, he will himself wipe away all tears from our eyes, Psa. xci. 15; Deut. xxxiii. 25; Rev. vii. 17.

EVENING XIV.



GLEANINGS.

IT had now become almost a regular matter, at the meetings of the domestic tea party, for the minister to occupy a part of the time with some family sketch from Scripture; and his promptness in rendering this service sheltered some of the friends, who from want of leisure, or want of habit, shrunk from any thing like a premeditated engagement to bring forward some subject at the meeting. These, however, were by no means backward in taking up a subject when once it was started, and frequently added much to the interest of the occasion by some suitable remark, or well-timed anecdote, suggested or called to recollection by the topics under consideration. On this evening, Mr. Elliott, Jun. entertained the company with some extracts which he had obtained from the

MEMORANDUM BOOK OF A GOOD OLD PARISH CLERK.

YOU must know that I have been forty years parish clerk of —; and as it was for many years my business to keep the parish registers, I was often led to make remarks on events

as they fell out; but never so much as when I was informed by my late worthy master, the clergyman, that a new law had passed, by which the registers were to be kept in an iron chest in the minister's own custody, and the entries made by himself. I must say, that, at first, I was not pleased at the alteration. The keeping of the registers had given me some consequence in the parish, which, perhaps, I loved too well; besides, it seemed as if I had done something wrong, and was not considered as any longer worthy of the confidence that had aforetime been placed in me; but master soon convinced me that all this was a mistake, that no disrespect whatever was intended to me, and that the measure was necessary for the general good. So, instead of any longer fretting over what could not be avoided, which my dame and I had been too much inclined to do, we resolved, while the registers were yet in my care, to mark down a few names which were connected in my memory with remarkable and instructive facts; and I assure you I have been often called upon by my neighbours, to tell them such or such a story out of my book. As all the circumstances related took place many years ago, and as I need not inform the reader of the place where they happened, or the names of the parties, I hope I shall not injure or offend any person or family by making known the facts.

J. T. and A. C.—I mark this down, because it was the first wedding at which I officiated; and I remember being mightily struck with some

good advice which my master, the clergyman, gave them when we went into the vestry to register the transaction. "Well, my young friends," said he, "I wish you much happiness in your new relation; and let me remind you, that it greatly depends on yourselves. You have now pledged yourselves to each other for the remainder of your lives, under whatever circumstances you may be placed; whether, in your case, sickness or health, riches or poverty, prosperity or adversity, may predominate, is beyond your foresight and control; but whether your union be for 'better or for worse,' depends on yourselves; on the dispositions which, under every varying scene, you exercise towards each other and towards God. If you would be prosperous, you must be industrious and prudent: if you would secure the continuance of mutual affection, you must exercise mutual confidence, kindness, and forbearance. Have no separate interests, but both pull one way: look much at the bright side of each other's character, and, as much as possible, overlook imperfections; or, if noticed, let it be with the most tender sympathy, and kind desire to assist in remedying them. Bear one another's burdens, and be assured you will each most effectually secure your own happiness by seeking that of the other. If you are blessed with children, and desire that they should be dutiful and affectionate, bring them up in the fear of God, and set them a good example. Whatever be your lot in life, set God always before you; 'in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' Live always in

view of the parting hour ; and live so that your separation may not be embittered by remorse, but cheered by a good hope of meeting again with joy in a better world." Whether or not this young couple profited by my worthy master's good advice, I cannot tell, for they went soon afterwards to reside in a distant part of the country ; but, being myself then newly married, I thought it as good for me as for them, so I penned it down while it was fresh in my memory ; and my wife and I have often read it over together, and endeavoured to shape our course by it. And though we have had many ups and downs, and roughs and smooths in the world, I can say, with thankfulness, at the end of forty-three years, that I believe neither of us ever had a wish that was not mutual, and that the greatest happiness of our lives, next to the hope of a better, has arisen from our connexion with each other.

THE same day that this wedding took place, we had to register two children ; one was Edward Augustus Ferdinand, son of Squire —, the great West India merchant, who had his country house in our parish. The other was John, the son of honest John —, the farmer's labourer. I remember with what airs of pride the great folks strutted down the aisle, and how they looked with scorn upon poor John and Betty, though an honest couple never broke bread ; and how the nurse wrapped up the little squire, and held it far away, as if she was afraid it should be poisoned by coming near a poor man's child ; though I must say, little John was

quite as clean as the gentleman's child, and much the finer, healthier-looking babe of the two. When the service was over, master had a word for them too ; indeed, he mostly was for dropping a good word as opportunity offered. " My friends," said he, " the charge committed to you is highly important. I pray God to impress on your minds a due sense of its weight, and give you grace and wisdom duly to perform it. These children, if they live, will, in the course of a few years, fill important stations in society ; not the less so for that station being humble, if such should be the case ;" (I take it, master made this observation, from noticing a look of scorn, which the great folks cast at the poor man's child, as if they thought *he* could not be of much consequence in the world ;) " every man is important in his own sphere ; and the influence of his conduct and example, whether good or evil, may extend to many who scarcely ever heard his name. See, then, that these children are trained in their respective spheres, to be good and useful members of society. Remember, too, that they have immortal souls, the everlasting welfare of which may greatly depend on your care or neglect of their early instruction and training. These children will meet you at the bar of God, to bear testimony to your faithfulness or neglect ; be it your concern that the meeting may be with mutual joy and gratitude, not with anguish and reproach." John and Betty humbly thanked master for his good advice, which they hoped to put in practice : the squire's party got into the carriage, and drove off ; and, as I afterwards

heard, they were not much pleased with the parson for taking them to task ; that was their slight way of speaking. " Well," thought I, " time will prove ;" and so it turned out, as the register of a later date will show.

WE had this year great mortality with the small-pox, seventeen funerals succeeding each other, and all within a very few weeks. Ah ! many a weeping family was there ; many a mother, refusing to be comforted for the loss of her firstborn ; many a father's hope blasted by the death of his son, when just rising into activity. Rich and poor alike suffered in this visitation ; and I remember well that the poor, who were but scantily fed, and who seemed to look upon their large families as heavy burdens, yet, when called to part with their little ones, were as loath as those who had thousands to bestow upon them ; and I thought, " Who knoweth what is good for man in this vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow ?" Among those who fell by this scourge, was L. H., a fine young lady of eighteen, who came on a visit to her uncle and aunt ; and going with some young friends to a merry-making, at a house where one of the servants had the small-pox, she caught the distemper, and died. Poor young thing ! she was warned against going, but, unwilling to forego her pleasure, she contrived to keep from the knowledge of her uncle and aunt the danger to which she exposed herself, until the disease began to discover itself. Ah ! then how keen was her remorse, and how bitter her lamentations !

and with what melancholy haste her poor father and mother were sent for, and arrived just in time to see their beautiful, sprightly daughter a loathsome, ghastly spectacle, and too far gone to hold any conversation with her! As long as her reason was spared, my good master used to visit her for prayer and conversation; and I was told, she listened eagerly to his instructions, and seemed greatly impressed by what he said. But master was too wise to say much about sick-bed impressions, or lead others to rely upon them. When questioned about such cases, he would generally give some such answer as this: "There was something hopeful about it, but we are not called upon to judge; and, however it may be in the case of —, I am sure that you and I have no reasonable or scriptural ground of hope, if we persist in folly and sin, and put off repentance to a dying day."

The same week with Miss H. died the fair son and daughter of Mr. B., two lovely children, of the ages of eight years and five. Dear little creatures! I heard the nurse say, that some weeks before they were ill, they were heard singing together that beautiful hymn,

"Come we that love the Lord;"

and when they came to that verse,

"There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin,"

she thought it sounded like the music of heaven; and it was delightful to think and hope that, though they were taken away from their

fond parents' embraces, they found a place, through the Redeemer's merits, among the

"Millions of infant souls that form
The family above ;"

and that there they are singing His praise in still sweeter strains than they could do on earth. Their poor mother, though she lived many years afterwards, was never like the same woman after this stroke. Master made some very fine remarks in his sermon the following Sunday ; when he took for his text Isa. xl. 6, "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."

I must mention one more who fell under this visitation :—R. S., a steady, pious, good young man, who supported his aged mother by his own industry. Never was any young man more beloved and respected in life, or more lamented in death : and this is one of the many cases in which I have been led to remark, that respectability is according to a man's character and conduct, not according to his station and circumstances in life.

My master often visited this young man in his last illness ; and he used to say, "I can listen to, and repeat, with unmingled pleasure, his dying expressions of hope and confidence, because they are in harmony with a life of devotedness and obedience. He has not waited till earth was about to be wrested from him, before he thought of fixing his hope in heaven ; nor does he look forward with joy to receiving the

Master's approbation, without ever having performed the work of a servant. No; he has long been a humble penitent; and he rejoices in the scriptural hope that his sins are forgiven for His name's sake, who has invited the penitent to come unto Him. Though imperfect, he has long been a 'good and faithful servant,' and he may look forward to being welcomed into the joy of his Lord. He knows whom he has believed, and has good reason to rejoice in being 'persuaded that he is able to keep that which he has committed unto him against that day.' This is just as the word of God leads us to expect. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.'"

A beautiful sermon it was that master made upon this occasion. There was not a dry eye in the church: for my part, I could not help thinking it was just as if the text was made on purpose: it was this, Luke vii. 12, 13, "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Oh, what comfortable words he said to the poor mourning widow! and how he entreated all the young people to live so, that if they should be called away by death, their ministers might have good reason for saying to their sorrowing parents, "Weep not!"

I cannot help remarking, that since that melancholy year, I have never witnessed such fatal ravages of the small-pox. Inoculation was then

becoming pretty general, and a few years afterwards, the new inoculation, or cow-pock, was discovered, which, whatever prejudices may yet remain against it, I am sure has been a great blessing to mankind; and I hope all parents, in future, will think it their duty seriously to consider the subject, and not sacrifice the health and life of their children either to prejudice or carelessness.

THE TWO WEDDINGS, AND THE TWO FUNERALS.

I PUT these in pairs, for they took place very near each other; and the contrast made so strong an impression on my mind at the time, that I can never think of one without calling to mind the other.

The two weddings took place on Old Michaelmas day; and never were two couples much more alike in their outward circumstances, or much more unlike in their appearance and manners at the time, or in their conduct and habits afterwards. The young men were workfellows, in constant employ; and the brides had each just quitted a respectable service, where they had saved, or had opportunities of saving, something towards entering on their new engagement with comfort.* Richard and Jenny, with their party,

* At least, so I should have thought; but I find I was mistaken. My good wife says, "How could you suppose that Jenny Thomson had saved any thing in *that* house, where all the servants spent more upon finery and pleasure-taking, than the highest wages could support? So far from that, whatever wages they took, I know they were at a loss for a shilling to help themselves before the quarter came round."

came up first, dressed in all the finery they could scrape together, and giggling at one another in such a thoughtless, indecent manner, that master was obliged to reprove them, and say, that unless they conducted themselves in a more proper manner, he could not proceed with the ceremony. I suppose Mrs. Jenny and her companions thought themselves finely set out, with their laces, and ribands, and flounces; and that every body was looking at them with admiration: for my part, they looked to me like chambermaids bewitched into countesses, as the old fairy tales used to tell of; or like good young David, when he was dressed up in Saul's armour; which however he had the good sense and piety to lay aside, as knowing it did not become him. I could not help thinking, "It will be well if some of this finery is not wanted to make the pot boil before the year goes round; and well, if this giddiness does not end in heaviness."

Presently, the other party came up, William and Martha, with her father, his sister, and two fellowservants. Every thing connected with the party seemed good and respectable. The young women were pictures of neatness; and, without having all their wealth hung upon their backs, they had clothes that would look creditable for years to come. The behaviour of the party too was as decent and suitable as their apparel. It was plain enough that they were cheerful and happy; but it was plain, too, that they felt they were entering into an important engagement; and they seemed careful to consider what would be their duties in it, and how they

might hope for the blessing of God upon it. The parties separated. Richard and Jenny spent their day at a public house, drinking and dancing, and took up their abode at some smartly furnished lodging, for which they had to pay a sight of money ; and, as my wife said, nothing of their own to show for it, let them pay it ever so long. William and Martha had taken a snug little cottage, and neatly furnished it with their joint savings. Martha's father being an old acquaintance of mine, I was asked to spend an hour with them in the evening, which I did, and saw with pleasure every thing that boded well for their future comfort. There was no idle mirth, no expensive feasting ; but a kind welcome to plain comfortable fare, and conversation both cheerful and profitable. One thing gave me particular satisfaction : Martha's master had presented them with a handsome Family Bible, advising them to bring it into use the very day of their marriage, and never to let it lie unused a single day of their lives. This advice they put in practice ; and they may, to this day, be appealed to, whether or not the blessing they then implored, has rested upon them. Every one who knows this worthy couple, would recommend their conduct as an example to all young people who come after. I think it may be truly said of them, that neither has ever lost an opportunity of honestly earning a shilling ; and neither has been inclined to squander a shilling idly, or to withhold or grudge one when it might be spent for their mutual comfort, or to promote any good cause. William has never been seen

drinking on an alehouse bench ; nor Martha gossiping in her own house, or at her neighbour's. She has always been intent on making her cottage the most comfortable in the parish ; and her husband, in consequence, has liked it the best. They have had several children, whose health and comfort in infancy were promoted by their diligent and tender care ; whose minds and habits have been trained to virtue and goodness under their precepts and example, and who are now gone out into life a credit to their early advantages, respectable in themselves, and promoting the comfort of all with whom they are connected. William and Martha began life in the fear of God, and that principle has ever discovered itself in their conduct. While "diligent in business" through the week, they have been also "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The sabbath they have ever regarded as the Lord's day, not their own ; thus its proper employment and its peculiar blessing have been secured. They have brought up their children not only with a view to their respectability and comfort in this life, but as candidates for another and a better ; and their sorrows over the grave of some, taken from them in early life, have been soothed by the delightful hope, that they are gone before to a world of blessedness, while those that remain, they have good reason to believe, are possessors of the only source of consistency and stability of character—genuine piety.

Richard and his bride took a very different course. They flashed away for a few months ; working, indeed, all the week, for neither of

them was of an indolent turn ; but whatever was earned was soon spent—no shilling laid by in store for a rainy day. On the contrary, the expenses of the Saturday night at the skittle-ground, and of Sunday at the tea-gardens, often nearly consumed the earnings of the week ; and, after a day or two's extravagance, the rest of the ensuing week was spent in want, wretchedness, and mutual reproach. By degrees, Richard became less fond of his wife, whose pretty face and fine dress were her chief attractions. The first was soon spoiled by fretting and ill temper, and the last was too expensive to support ; and especially as a young family came on, Richard found he could take his Sunday pleasures much better without the incumbrance of wife and children ; he, therefore, seldom came home after receiving his wages until it was all spent, leaving his family to subsist, perhaps, on a shilling or two which his wife had extorted from him on the way from the pay-table to the public-house ; or, perhaps, wholly dependent on what she might have chanced to earn herself. They shifted their abode to meaner and meaner lodgings, until they occupied one of the most wretched garrets in the place, but for which (being still called a furnished lodging) they had the mortification of knowing, that they had, in course of years, paid more than was expended in furnishing their neighbour's well-stocked dwelling. Their finery gradually gave place to rags ; and she who always had been giddy, wasteful, and slatternly, became, by degrees, absolutely indolent and filthy. "It is of no use to try," was always in her mouth, when urged to any

attempt to better her condition. Her children were left to wander about the streets, untaught, ragged, and half-starved ; and, as they grew up, became nuisances to the neighbourhood. Far from being, in any respect, fit to be admitted into respectable families, or even inclined to get an honest livelihood, they preferred the uncertain gain of poaching, fishing, and pilfering gardens and orchards. Their sabbaths were spent in gambling, profanity, and vice of every kind. Their father, too—for bad, unless corrected, surely goes on to worse—in time entirely forsook the workshop for the ale-bench : as his honest resources failed, he was led on to gambling and dishonesty ; and at length, with one of his sons, was transported for a robbery. The unhappy mother found an asylum in the workhouse ; and the rest of her family are scattered about with any character rather than those of useful, respectable, or thriving.

I would not say an ill-natured thing of a neighbour, or tread upon the fallen ; but I wish I could persuade young people to consider, what are the natural consequences of the line of conduct they are inclined to pursue : it might often cause them to shudder, and retreat from taking a step that would have led them to misery and ruin. I do not set up for a prophet ; but the Michaelmas day that these two young couples were in the church together, I could foresee their course almost as plainly as I can tell it now ; at least, I knew that there was no more reason to expect that Richard and Jenny would be as happy as William and Martha, than there would

be to expect that a crop of wheat should be reaped from a field sown with thistles.

THE two funerals. Feb. —, was buried old Madam C—, who, surrounded by plenty and elegance, had lived a life of penury and misery. Though possessed of an ample fortune, and having no one but herself to provide for, the poor old lady had got a notion, that she should surely come to want, and die in a workhouse. Under this impression, she feared to spend her money upon the most needful articles, lest it should not hold out to the time of another payment. She every year saved three-fourths of her income, which she was afraid to put out to interest, lest the bank should break. So she kept by her, concealed in different parts of the house, several thousand pounds lying dead, and in continual danger of being stolen. Not only would she refuse every application for charitable assistance, or for the promotion of any good design, lest she should come to want the money herself, but she even grudged herself common necessaries. The fruit and vegetables in the garden were suffered to remain till they perished, from fear that there would not be enough to last the season; and large chests of clothes, which had belonged to her deceased relatives, were suffered to become the prey of moths, rather than be distributed among the poor; for she might—who could tell?—she might live to want them herself. Her last hours were disturbed by a restless fear that her hoards had been discovered, and that there would not be money enough left in the house to bury

her. Some attempts were made to direct her thoughts to the infinitely more important concerns of her never-dying soul. She was visited, conversed, and prayed with; but she did not wish the visits to be repeated, for she said they afforded her no comfort. She was persuaded to read the Bible; but she said, she could find only such passages as, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire." She turned away from the Bible, and called her servant to read the newspaper to her; but there was nothing in it interesting, and she bid her find something else: but nothing could soothe, nothing could amuse her—how should it? "For there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." At length, having wearied out all her attendants, the poor old lady departed this life, leaving many to pity, but none to regret her. A pompous funeral was made for her; and, after many advertisements for the next heir had been inserted in the public papers, some very distant relative, whom she had long forgotten, or perhaps of whom she had never heard, came into the possession of her immense property. Ah, thought I, how true is the saying of the Psalmist, "Surely man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them!"

The same week with this *poor rich* woman

died old Mary J., who might truly be called a *rich poor* woman. She lived in a poor hovel, that scarcely kept out the weather ; but she said it was convenient enough, that she had spent many happy years in it, and that, when she left it, she expected to go to "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." She seldom tasted richer food than porridge or potatoes ; but a contented mind was to her a continual feast. If her supplies ran low, she would still say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He who has sustained me, and provided for me so many years, will not deny me what little more I want to carry me to the end of my journey." If a supply came in, she said her cup was running over, but she hoped the Lord would not suffer her to have *all* her portion in this world. As long as she could go abroad, the house of God was her delight : and when she was confined to her bed, still she found the word of God to be meat and drink to her soul, and adored the mercy that had preserved her eyesight, to enable her to read its precious truths. But at last her eyesight failed ; and then she was equally thankful that her God put it into the heart of one kind neighbour and another to read it to her. So after patiently enduring the will of God on earth, she departed in humble hope of heaven through the merits of her blessed Redeemer. Her Bible was all she had to leave, and she left it to a pious young friend, who had often with pleasure read it to her, and in many ways ministered to her comfort. There were no plumes or escutcheons at her funeral, but the

neighbours put together a trifle, to add a little decency of appearance to what the parish bestowed. She was sincerely respected and regretted by all who knew her ; and the wish of many a mother for her child was, that she might grow up as good a woman as poor old Mary J.

THE GENTLEMAN REDUCED, AND THE PARISH LAD
ADVANCED.

Squire F., or, as he was latterly called, the *poor gentleman*, was born to a good estate. His parents both died when he was young ; they left him several thousand pounds, and his grandmother bequeathed him many more. His guardian was a most upright and intelligent man, and managed the property to the best advantage, as well as conducted the young man's education in a manner most likely to conduce to his future welfare and respectability. This good gentleman had imbibed the notion, which I have heard master say was adopted by the Jews of old, and by the wisest nations in general, that young persons, however high-born and wealthy, should be instructed in some mechanical or commercial business, both with a view to accustom them to habits of diligence and perseverance, and to furnish them with the means of providing for themselves in case of any unforeseen vicissitude in circumstances. Accordingly, young master was articled to a respectable profession, but, as I have heard say, sorely against his will. He was of an indolent disposition, and took little interest in any thing he saw or was set about ; so, of course, he made no great progress. When he

came of age, and was out of his time, there were great rejoicings; and no doubt he thought his happiness was begun, now he was become his own master. But there is no happiness without activity; as I heard my good master say from the pulpit, "When man was made in innocence, and placed in a situation of complete felicity, he was not left without employment, but was set to dress and keep the garden; and even the rest of heaven is to be made sweet by constant and unwearied activity, for there the servants of God serve him." It would be well for young people in general to bear this in mind, and accustom themselves to take pleasure in being active and useful, instead of reckoning it a toil and drudgery.

On the young squire's birthday, there was a grand dinner party and a ball; but he was tired out before it was half over. After this day, some time was employed in returning the visits of those who had visited him on coming of age; but the squire yawned in company, and dropped asleep when alone. Then he was advised to alter and new furnish his house, and lay out his grounds in a different style: so this was taken in hand; and it was long in being accomplished, for one person recommended one thing, and one another, and every whim was adopted without regard to expense: and when completed, it was too much of a medley to be approved by persons of taste. The house was elegantly furnished, but the gentleman was soon tired of looking at it. The library was well stocked with valuable books, but the gentleman had no taste for

reading. He bought fine horses, but seldom exerted himself so much as to ride them ; in a little time he discovered or imagined some imperfection in them, sold them at a heavy loss, and bought others. He was now not obliged to work, and time soon hung heavy on his hands ; he ate without hunger, drank without thirst, and went to bed without weariness, except that arising from indolence ; in fact, he seemed almost to live only to eat, and drink, and sleep. He was not ill-natured or ill-inclined, but willing to comply with every invitation to do good ; but, for want of taking the trouble (an exertion to which he never could be roused) to inquire into the nature and necessity of the case, a vast deal more money was spent than good achieved. A host of selfish relatives imposed on his indolent good-nature, and sponged on his liberality ; and in a little time he found that, with a very small portion of either enjoyment or usefulness, he had exceeded in expense his noble income. Still he was not poor ; he had more than sufficient for his wants, could he but have roused himself to direct and manage his expenses ; or he might, for he was still a young man, have improved his property by engaging in some mercantile concern ; but for this he had not sufficient activity. He was indeed more than once induced, by designing adventurers, to engage in rash speculations ; but they completely failed, and left him still more reduced. By degrees he became gloomy and depressed in spirits, and shunned the society of his friends ; probably because he could no longer support the splendid entertain-

ments to which he had formerly invited them. At length, his elegant mansion was quitted ; his library and his furniture were sold. His health became impaired through his having had recourse to that fatal remedy for sorrow—intemperance. And after being for some years supported almost wholly by charity, he sunk into an early grave, without leaving any one really benefited by the thousands he had squandered, and without having secured either the gratitude or esteem of those connected with him. Pity had long been excited towards him ; but the most that pity or friendship could do was to relieve present distress : permanent and effectual assistance could not be extended to one who could not be roused to assist himself ; and Pity was the only mourner at his grave.

Very different was the career of my worthy old neighbour —, who died about the same time with the poor squire. He was a poor workhouse boy in a distant county ; but being of an active, persevering turn, he surmounted the disadvantages of his situation, and, under the blessing of God, gradually rose to competence in life. In his childhood, by unaided diligence, he had acquired the art of reading : by rising extremely early, and redeeming every moment of extra time, he obtained the means of purchasing a few books ; then of learning to write. As soon as he was free from his parish engagement, he walked his way to London with a few pence ; there he offered himself, and gained employment to open and shut a shop, clean shoes, and perform other menial offices. He had many hardships

to endure from servants a little exalted above himself, but he had been inured to hardship from his infancy; he was compliant, active, and patient; he could do every one's drudgery, and bear every one's buffet, and retire and forget it all on his little flock bed under the counter. At length, his patient industry and assiduous attention caught the notice of his master, and he was advanced a step in the long scale of underlings employed in that extensive establishment. He enjoyed his advancement, but it did not intoxicate him. He continued industrious and obliging, humble and frugal, and still intent on improving his mind and adding to his stock of useful acquirements. One in a superior station in the shop quitted it through ill health; and his master wished that his poor faithful industrious Tom had but been qualified by education to undertake the post, in which he must place an untried stranger; but, knowing the history of his early years, he could not imagine him possessed of the necessary qualifications. To his utter astonishment he found, that for several months past Tom had performed the duties of his afflicted fellow-servant, in addition to his own; and Tom was immediately appointed to succeed him. He was advanced from step to step, still seizing every opportunity of enlarging his mind and extending his information, and still applying all he learned to practical purposes, until, at length, his services were considered so essential to the prosperity of the establishment, that his master, a liberal-minded man, offered him a share in the concern, and found that by industry and fru-

gality he had already realized a little property, which he now gladly embraced the opportunity of employing to advantage. Poor Yorkshire Tom, as he was once called, was now looked upon as a gentleman and a man of substance ; but he had not waited till this time to impart as well as to accumulate. He had long been a subscriber to several benevolent institutions for circulating the Bible, for visiting the sick, for instructing poor children, for sending out missionaries to the heathen, and for distributing tracts. At first, when he had but his penny to bestow, it was given with hearty good will and earnest prayer for a Divine blessing to multiply the little seed ; his heart—it is not always the case—enlarged with his means ; his shilling and his pound were given with equal readiness ; his prosperity still increased, and his liberality and activity did not slacken. He became one of the richest men in the neighbourhood, one of the most active and efficient directors, and one of the most liberal benefactors to almost every beneficent institution. He lived to a good old age, and died lamented by hundreds. The widow's tear, the orphan's blessing, bedew his tomb, and his name is in everlasting remembrance.

THE WAY TO PEACE ; OR, RULES TO BE OBSERVED BY FRIENDS WHO ARE AT VARIANCE, IF THEY WISH TO BE RECONCILED.

BY THE LATE REV. J. TAYLOR, OF QUEENSHEAD.

1. INQUIRE plainly what is wrong ; and

wherein the offence consists. Like David to his angry brother, let the party who observes that offence has been taken, go to the offended person, and calmly, but firmly inquire "What have I now done?" Or, if he cannot obtain access in person, let him inquire of a mutual friend; and like the same sensible young man, say, "What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" Such an inquiry will often produce an explanation, that would heal the breach, and restore friendship.

2. Let the offender ask what is required in order to remove the displeasure; and let the offended party take care that the requisition be reasonable, moderate, and satisfactory. And especially be careful, if the requisition be complied with, that it does satisfy; and that no further concession be expected or desired. Let not the offended insist too rigorously on full satisfaction; but rather give up a part of his just claims, than exceed them, 1 Cor. vi. 6, 7. Let him be ready to forgive when he perceives evidence of the sincere repentance of the offender; remembering who has said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matt. vi. 15: read also Mark xi. 25; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13. And let the offender be ready and willing to confess his fault, and give reasonable satisfaction to the offended. Let both parties show a sincere desire and real forwardness for reconciliation and peace. Let them read together, and pray over the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians; and sedu-

lously endeavour to feel and exhibit the blessed influence of that love which is there so justly commended.

3. If the parties at variance can satisfactorily settle the business, it is well, and often the best. But, if they cannot, then, instead of accusing, reproaching, and provoking each other, let them choose sensible, faithful, and impartial men, and refer the whole business to them. Let both parties agree to regard the decision of these disinterested persons as binding; and when they have given their decision, let the matter be dropped.

4. In forming a judgment, let those to whom the examination has been referred, endeavour to ascertain the real facts of the offence which has been committed; and then keep to the subject themselves in investigating the question, and labour to keep all parties concerned from wandering to other topics. Let them never censure or accuse any one without full evidence of his guilt. Let them take care that his accusers plainly and distinctly state what fault the accused has committed; and not extend their complaints to what has been intended. God alone can know the designs and motives of our fellow creatures; and it is seldom safe for us to guess at them. Let them be cautious to distinguish truth from presumption or probability; and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence; the temptations, causes, necessity, provocations, and all other extenuations of the crime that can be fairly pleaded. Let these have their full weight in favour of the offender; but expatiate little on the aggravations of a crime. It very seldom promotes

reconciliation; but often retards or prevents it. Let them talk no more on a subject than it deserves. And, remembering the value of time, waste none of it in vain discourse, which never does any good, but often produces mischief.

5. In determining the business, let them consider the general dispositions and character of the parties; their usual conduct on other occasions, and towards other persons; and take notice how much of the charge is true; how much certain; how much doubtful; and in the doubtful, on which side the greatest probability lies. Let them recommend such methods to heal the breach as are easiest, safest, cheapest, and most honourable and pleasing in the sight of God and good men. Let them endeavour neither to grieve nor injure any of their friends; but recollect that God is their best friend, and be especially careful not to offend him. If he has declared his will in the Bible, on the subject in debate, let them be determined to follow it at all hazards. But let them be sure that they rightly understand, and impartially apply what God says. Sense, reason, gratitude, and self-interest require that the will of the Creator should be the supreme law of his creatures.

HOW TO DISARM AN ENEMY.

It is said, that bees and wasps will not sting a person whose skin is imbued with honey.

Hence those who are much exposed to the venom of these little creatures, when they have occasion to hive bees, or to take a nest of wasps, smear their face and hands with honey, which is found to be the best preservative. When we are annoyed with insult, persecution, and opposition, from perverse and malignant men, the best defence against their venom is to have the spirit bathed in honey. Let every part be saturated with meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and patience; and the most spiteful enemy will be disappointed in his endeavours to inflict a sting: we shall remain uninjured, while his venom returns to corrode his own malignant bosom; or, what is far better, the honey with which he comes in contact will neutralize his gall; the coals of forgiving love will dissolve his hatred, and the good returned for evil will overcome evil with good.

THE VALUE OF AN ESTABLISHED CHARACTER.

As the noisy motley train of electioneers paraded the street, headed by flags and a band of music, a little boy exclaimed, "Mother, there's Mr. B. playing the cymbals!" "No, my dear," replied his mother, "I am sure you must be mistaken." "Indeed, mother, it was Mr. B., for I saw him myself." "I must still think you are mistaken; for, though I did not see the person to whom you allude, I am sure Mr. B. was not

there." The little boy appeared surprised at his mother's expressing herself with a degree of confidence by no means habitual to her; he watched for the return of the party, and then, by a more narrow inspection, ascertained that the person in question was not Mr. B., though very much like him. Some time afterwards, he again asked his mother how it was that she felt so certain about Mr. B., when she had not seen the person. She replied, that the thing was in itself very unlikely. "Why, mother?" continued the inquiring child, "Mr. B. can play music, and he has a right to go to the election; for I heard his brother say that they should both vote for —." "True, William; and yet I have known Mr. B. long enough to say, with confidence, he is neither playing the music, nor running with the rabble at an election. It is his privilege and his duty to vote for such a person as he thinks likely to promote the welfare of the country in parliament; but he will exercise that privilege, and discharge that duty, as a man of business and a Christian. He has no time to waste in idly parading the streets, and he has no disposition to run with the multitude to the same excess of riot. He will give his vote with integrity and honour, and then return to his regular avocations. There are duties, William, which a consistent Christian will not neglect; there are scenes in which he will not be found: and when a man has been known for a long series of years to maintain a steady, undeviating, and consistent course, his fellow Christians, and even the

men of the world, begin to say, with some degree of confidence, 'If he is alive and well, at such a time, you will most likely find him in such a place; but in such or such places or engagements you certainly will not find him.'

"I know a man whose minister, if he sees his place unoccupied in the house of God, is immediately alarmed, and knows that there must be some great and unavoidable cause for his absence. He would as soon expect to see all the pews walk out of their places, as imagine, for a moment, that his absent friend was detained at the play-house, the ball-room, the card-table, or even a common party of pleasure. Nor is the good man's religion confined to religious observances; it runs through all his common actions. Everybody likes to deal with him, because they are sure of being fairly and honourably dealt with. His recommendation or his testimony carries great weight; because he is known to speak what he conscientiously believes, without partiality and without hypocrisy. He is often fixed upon as the fittest person to be intrusted with the disposal of sacred property, with the guardianship of the widow and the orphan, with the arbitration of disputes; because he is known to be a wise and faithful man, and 'one that fears God above many.' It is an unspeakable happiness for an individual to have his own reliance firmly placed on a sure basis, and to be able to say, 'I know whom I have believed;' and an unspeakable honour to have established such a character that

those around may be able to say, 'We know how this man will act; his great and constant care evidently is to maintain a conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ.'

THE ENEMY OF SOULS FOILED WITH HIS OWN WEAPONS.

IT is pretty generally known, that when Popery was the established religion of our land, and no other tolerated therein, the sabbath was most awfully profaned, as it is to this day in Roman Catholic countries, by strange mixtures of heathen and popish ceremonies, and by all kinds of worldly sports and dissipation, in which the lower classes of society are especially invited to indulge themselves. At the time of the Reformation from Popery, the good men who were instrumental in effecting that happy change, endeavoured to procure the due observance of the sabbath, but there was much to contend with. The ignorant and thoughtless were attached to their low pleasures and sinful indulgences, and desired to pursue them without restraint; and those in authority were, in general, much more afraid of strictness in religion than of latitude in sin. The death of the pious young king Edward frustrated many good designs. In the succeeding reign, Popery and persecution again overspread the land; and though, at its close, Protestantism regained the ascendancy, there was still a very general opposition against serious vital godliness, with a dis-

position to represent religion as consisting chiefly in outward pomp and observance, and by no means requiring habitual and conscientious holiness. But, however opposed, truth will find its level. Those who had been made partakers of the grace of God in truth, and who referred to the Holy Scriptures as their rule of duty, were led to esteem the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable; and they endeavoured to honour it by dedicating it to the service of God, and the edification of their souls. Parents and ministers, who felt and acted thus, naturally exerted their influence in suppressing what they considered sinful, and in promoting the proper observance of the sacred day. Their endeavours became obnoxious to a king and government, whose practice and preferences lay quite the contrary way; and a law was enacted, forbidding all ministers, churchwardens, and others, to interfere with or prevent dancing, wrestling, and other games on the Lord's day. This was a great grief and distress to all good men, and many were cast out of their livings for refusing to read this unrighteous proclamation, which was called "The Book of Sports." In too many instances there is reason to fear, that by this act of authority sinners were emboldened in their wickedness, and pursued it even to their everlasting ruin. One extraordinary instance, however, remains upon record, in which this device of Satan to ruin the souls of men, was overruled to the awakening and conversion of one from the error of his ways.

The person referred to was Mr. Richard Conder, a dairy farmer, at Croydon, in Cambridgeshire. The anecdote was thus related to a great-grandson of his, (Dr. Conder, many years an eminent minister in London,) by an old gentleman, who remembered when a boy to have heard it from Mr. Conder himself.

"I used," said he, "when young to accompany my father to Royston market, which Mr. Conder also frequented. The custom of the good men in those days was, when they had done their marketing, to meet together and take needful refreshment in a private room, where, without interruption, they might talk freely about the things of God, how they had heard on the sabbath day, and how they had gone on the week past, etc. I was admitted to sit in a corner of the room. One day, when I was there, the conversation turned upon the question, 'By what means God first visited their souls, and began a work of grace upon them?' It was your great-grandfather's turn to speak, and his account struck me so, that I never forgot it. He told the company as follows:—'When I was a young man, I was greatly addicted to foot-ball playing; and as the custom was in our parish, and many others, the young men, as soon as church was over, took a foot-ball, and went to play. Our minister often remonstrated against our breaking the sabbath, which however had little effect; only my conscience checked me at times, and I would sometimes steal away and hide myself from my companions. But, being dexterous at the game,

they would find me out, and get me again among them. This would bring on me more guilt and horror of conscience. Thus I went on sinning and repenting a long time, but had no resolution to break off from the practice, till, one sabbath morning, our good minister acquainted his hearers, that he was very sorry to tell them, that by order of the king (James I.) and council, he must read them the following paper, or turn out of his living. This was "The Book of Sports," forbidding the ministers or churchwardens, or any others, to molest or discourage the youth, in what were called their manly sports and recreations on the Lord's day, etc. While our minister was reading it, I was seized with a chill and horror not to be described. Now, thought I, iniquity is established by law, and sinners are hardened in their sinful ways! What sore judgments are to be expected upon so wicked and guilty a nation! What shall I do? Whither shall I flee? How shall I escape the wrath to come? And God set in so with it, that I thought it was high time to be in earnest about salvation; and from that time I never had the least inclination to take a foot-ball in hand, or to join my vain companions any more: so that I date my conversion from that time, and adore the grace of God in making that to be an ordinance for my salvation, which the devil and wicked governors laid as a trap for my destruction.'

"This," continued the narrator, "I heard him tell; and I hope with some serious benefit to my own soul." Thus the Lord "taketh the wise in their own craftiness." He maketh the wrath of

man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains, 1 Cor. iii. 19; Psa. lxxvi. 10.

SABBATH BREAKING IN THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY.

"I CANNOT forget that, in my youth," says the pious Richard Baxter, "in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers, for not reading publicly 'The Book of Sports,' and dancing on the Lord's day, one of my father's own tenants was the town piper, hired by the year, for many years together, and the place of the dancing assembly was not a hundred yards from our door. We could not, on the Lord's day, either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise or instruct a servant, but with the noise of the piper, and the shoutings in the street, continually in our ears. Even among a tractable people, we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called puritans, precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather chose to read the Scriptures than to do as they did; though there was no savour of nonconformity in our family. And when the people, by the book, were allowed to play and dance out of service time, they could so hardly break off their sports, that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over. Sometimes the morris dancers would come into the church in all their linen, and scarfs, and antic dresses, with morris bells jingling at their legs; and, as soon as common

prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again."*

We have great reason for thankfulness that iniquity is not now established by law ; yet there is still much room for regret, that the Lord's day is awfully profaned among people of all classes. Surely the righteous ought to sigh and cry for the abominations that are in the midst of the land in this respect. But it is not enough, though it is very important, that we enjoy and improve the sabbath ourselves, and lament its profanation by others. Each Christian, in a greater or a less degree, may be regarded as " his brother's keeper." Especially, as heads of families, are we deeply concerned, that no servant be deprived of the privileges of the sabbath ; no tradesman encouraged in violating it for our gratification. And do we make a practice of circulating among transgressors suitable cautions and warnings against the errors of their ways, and of affectionately inviting them to share with us the holy pleasures of the sanctuary ?

A GOOD BOOK MADE A GREAT BLESSING.

How various are the methods employed by Divine Wisdom in bringing sinners to an acquaintance with Divine truth ; sometimes by the preaching of the gospel, sometimes by the conversation of a Christian friend, sometimes by

* Orme's Life of Baxter.

the reading of the Scriptures, or some other good book ! A farmer in Gloucestershire had two children : a son, afflicted with intense deafness, in consequence of typhus fever, and in whom symptoms of consumption began to appear ; and a daughter, a gay, lively girl, distinguished by a love for reading ; yet both, like their father, utterly destitute of religion. One evening, when the farmer returned from market, half intoxicated, he threw a small book into the lap of his girl, saying, he had brought her a present from C— market. He did not know what it was about ; but the woman who kept the book-stall had recommended it to him. It was “ Beaufoy’s Guide to True Pilgrims, and Touchstone for deceived Souls.” The young woman felt little interest in it ; but her brother eagerly seized on it, and, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, learned from it the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. His disorder increased, and in a few months brought him to the grave. The little book, and the Bible, which it naturally brought into notice, were his constant companions to the last ; and though not privileged to hear the voice of any living instructor, he died happy in the rich consolations of the gospel. His sister afterwards removed to —, where she was brought under the sound of the gospel ; and, through rich mercy, the gospel was brought home to her heart. She then became very desirous of reading the book which she had formerly so lightly esteemed, but which had been made such a blessing to her brother. She soon obtained it, and derived from it much seasonable instruc-

tion. The character of the father, at the time this was written, still remained unchanged ; but, as his daughter very justly observed, " I still pray for him ; I do not despair. Who can tell but God may find some way of coming to his heart ? God, who has been so rich in mercy towards my brother and me, may yet have mercy in store for our poor blind father."

A H I N T.

It is of no small importance that those especially whose office it is to recommend religion to others, should cultivate a kind, gentle, and winning deportment. " We were gentle among you," said the eminently successful apostle of the Gentiles, " even as a nurse cherisheth her children." A very simple incident will serve to illustrate this sentiment. Many years ago, the son of a highly respectable family was placed in business with his grandfather, where it was his duty to answer the applications of persons calling on business. On one occasion, a stiff, prim, powdered divine came up, and in a haughty tone addressed the youth : " Is your master at home ?" Not long afterwards, a cheerful, benevolent-looking gentleman called, and on being answered by the same youth, good-humouredly said to him, " Now, can you manage to ride my horse up and down a few minutes, while I go in and speak to Mr. — ?" With cheerful alacrity the youth complied with the request ; and contrasting the kind and condescending manners of this visitor

with the repulsive haughtiness of the former, from that moment imbibed a strong prejudice (if such it might be called) in favour of the religious instructions imparted by the latter gentleman, and against those of the former. The attractive visitor was the late Rev. Richard Cecil, who was remarkably successful in winning the attention of young persons to the great truths that belong to their everlasting peace; and herein, probably, was part of the secret of his success. Gentleness and kindness of manners in the teacher will not indeed carry the gospel in power to the heart; but they may do much in removing the covering of prejudice from the ears. It is something to gain the gospel a favourable hearing; for faith cometh by hearing: and the manners and deportment of both ministers and private Christians should be such as to echo every invitation of the gospel, saying, "Come with us, and we will do you good."

EVENING XV.



IMPROVEMENT OF SPARE MINUTES.

THE honourable and excellent Robert Boyle says:—"Betwixt the more stated employments, and more important occurrences of human life, there usually happens to be interposed certain intervals of time, which, though they are wont to be neglected, as being singly, or within the compass of one day inconsiderable, yet in a man's whole life they amount to no contemptible portion of it. Now, these uncertain parentheses, if I may so call them, or interludes, that happen to come between the more solemn passages, whether business or recreations, of human life, are lost by most men, for want of valuing them aright; and even by good men, for want of skill to preserve them. But, as though grains of sand and ashes be but of a despicable smallness, and very easy and liable to be scattered and blown away, yet the skilful artificer, by a vehement fire, brings numbers of these to afford him that noble substance, glass; by whose help we may both see ourselves and our blemishes lively represented as in looking-glasses, and discern celestial objects as with telescopes, and with

the sunbeams kindle disposed materials as with burning-glasses ; so when these little fragments or parcels of time, which, if not carefully looked to, would be dissipated and lost, come to be managed by a skilful Christian, and to be improved by the celestial fire of devotion, they may be so ordered as to afford us looking-glasses to dress our souls by, and perspectives to discover heavenly wonders, and incentives to inflame our hearts with charity and zeal. And since goldsmiths and refiners are wont, all the year long, carefully to save the very sweepings of their shops, because they contain in them some filings or dust of those richer metals, gold and silver, I see not why a Christian may not be as careful not to lose the fragments and lesser intervals of a thing incomparably more precious than any metal—time : especially when the improvement of them may not only redeem so many portions of our life, but turn them to pious uses, and particularly to the great advantage of devotion.”

HINTS ON FRUGALITY.

1. **BUY** nothing but what you really need. Those who accustom themselves to buy things because they are pretty, or curious, or are offered a great bargain, are likely to fill their houses with *need-nots*, and to deprive themselves of the means of obtaining what they need.

2. In purchasing, choose such things as are durable, rather than such as are showy ; and what is in itself neat and becoming, rather than what

is just the top of the fashion. Fashions soon change; and that which is glaringly fashionable now, will be notoriously unfashionable a little time hence.

3. Though it may sometimes call for the exercise of self-denial, whatever you purchase, or whatever you think you want, be resolute in retaining something in your power to meet an unforeseen, an indispensable need. For want of this precaution, many have been compelled to part with what they wished to preserve, to obtain something that they could not do without.

4. Endeavour to have different things for different purposes, and to keep each to its proper use. Nothing is more destructive than to make one thing do the work of two or three.

5. Never use a better thing of its kind without being satisfied that a worse would not answer the purpose. Many people, whenever they obtain a new thing, directly lay aside the old one, and forget to use it, or perhaps suffer it to be thrown about and destroyed. Such are not likely to leave behind them much that is worth having.

6. If intrusted with the property of others, be as careful of it as if it were your own. This is the likeliest way to be honestly possessed of property yourself, and to acquire a habit of taking care of it.

7. If children are committed to your care, bring them up in habits of knowing the value of property, and the importance of taking care of it. Those who are careful themselves, but suffer their children to be extravagant, have little

encouragement to lay up property for them to squander.

8. See that in all your gains, and savings, and prospects, you keep the fear of God before your eyes. His blessing alone maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. "Wealth gotten by vanity," (that is, unjust selfish gain,) "shall be diminished," Prov. xiii. 11. It is like putting money into a bag with holes; but a good man shall leave an inheritance to his children's children, Prov. xiii. 22.

9. Whatever you do for your children, do not neglect their best interests. Teach them to read, provide them with a Bible, store their minds with good principles, that so they may be prepared to be content with a little, or faithfully to improve and safely to enjoy more; and be sure to lay up for them a good store of prayers. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" and a parent's prayers have often been answered in rich blessings on his offspring, long after his head has been laid in the grave. Let the chief concern be for yourselves and them, that you may all be possessors of durable riches and righteousness, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal, Matt. vi. 20.

LIBERALITY AND PROFUSION.

"HE is a kind-hearted, liberal man, always generous and free with his money." So said Mr. Watson, of his neighbour Mr. Jenkins, on

whom he had just called with a petition on behalf of a poor destitute widow and family, and finding that he was from home, had afterwards addressed him in the street ; "he gave two sovereigns without even looking at the case."

"I would not disparage your friend," replied Mrs. Selby, to whom the remark was addressed ; "I believe neighbour Jenkins is a very kind-hearted man, but I question whether there is not more of profusion than liberality in his manner of giving : for want of examining into the cases he assists, and of acting by a plan in dispensing his gifts, his charities are not half so beneficial as they might otherwise be."

"Well, well, every one to his own way ; for my part, I like the generous heart that directs the hand straight to the pocket, without any inquiries. Pray how did you get on with the case of poor Richards, the carpenter, who was burnt out?"

"Not so well as was at first anticipated. A neighbour, who was very warm in the cause, undertook to represent it to several influential friends, from whom he expected to get a considerable sum towards purchasing the poor man a chest of tools ; but in the hurry of his engagements, he omitted for several days to call on the parties, until two of the principal families had left town ; then old Ralph Summaton, who is as eccentric as he is benevolent, and generally regulates his gifts by those of his neighbour Montague, not seeing his name to the paper, set his own down for a mere trifle ; and of the other wealthy inhabitants, some were offended at not

having been applied to at first, and others seeing the small sums given by tradespeople, were content with giving a trifle with their initial, instead of large sums with their names."

"It is a pity the business was so ill managed; poor Richards is a truly deserving man. What a shame it is for people to undertake what they do not intend to fulfil!"

"Nay, Samuel Watson, you are too hard; I doubt not neighbour Jenkins did intend to render all the service he had promised to neighbour Richards: the blame is, when warm-hearted people undertake a business, without duly considering whether they have the means of accomplishing it; and, when having undertaken a matter, they suffer themselves to be diverted from it by indolence, forgetfulness, or self-gratification."

"I had no idea it was Mr. Jenkins to whom you alluded; however, be it who it might, it was very wrong: no doubt he is sadly grieved about it."

"He expressed much concern, and promised to speak to his friend Montague on his return from the sea-side, which I hope he will remember to do. That, however, will be two months hence, by which time the first warm feeling of sympathy in the poor man's calamity will have subsided, and persons who have given, however small a sum, will not like to be called upon again. Besides, now was the time. Had the tools been immediately purchased, they would have enabled Richards and his two lads to work for the support of the family; for want of

which, it is to be feared, that the little money collected must needs go to keep the family from immediate want, instead of furnishing them with means for future subsistence."


To make a long story short, Mr. Jenkins—the liberal, warm-hearted Mr. Jenkins—had that morning set out to pay a little bill to poor Richards, for carpenter's work done just before his misfortune; when he was met by his neighbour Watson, and appealed to on the case of widow Cox. It was a touching story, and he immediately gave the two sovereigns he had put in his pocket to pay Richards, and was about to return home for more money, when he met another friend, who proposed to him to take a walk into the country. Always the creature of impulse, he complied; but happened to recollect that he must call on a bedridden old man, and leave him five shillings. These he borrowed of his friend, and forgot to pay. He resolved to go immediately on his return, or at least early the next morning, to Richards; but it escaped his memory, and the poor man and his family were, in consequence, greatly distressed, and yet afraid of offending one who really wished to be their benefactor, by applying for it. After several days Richards ventured to call, supposing that Mr. Jenkins had forgotten his promise. He was grieved at his own forgetfulness, and gave several shillings more than the amount of his bill. And yet this did not remedy the injury, for Richards, for want of money to go to market for materials, had lost a job of work, by which he would have cleared a pound.

About the same time, a gentleman of considerable property, lately come to reside in the neighbourhood, called on Mr. Jenkins to inquire the character and circumstances of widow Cox. The gift of the two sovereigns had escaped his recollection, and he had not even put himself in possession of the statement presented to him by Mr. Watson. With evident confusion and embarrassment he replied, "Widow Cox—I really do not exactly recollect her at this moment—O yes—I believe it is a good case—a very good case indeed. I know it was recommended to me by a neighbour."

The stranger having seen Mr. Jenkins's name at the head of the list, with a donation of two pounds, naturally supposed that he was well acquainted with the family, and would be the fittest person to whom to apply for information. The hesitation with which he answered, was construed into a knowledge of some unfavourable circumstances; and though no further explanation was pressed for, the gentleman left with a disadvantageous impression, and dismissed the case with a trifling contribution.

And what did Mrs. Selby contribute towards the relief of widow Cox and her family? Why, truly, she had it not in her power to set down her name for a large sum; for she and her husband had had sharp struggling in carrying on business, and maintaining their family, but "she did what she could." She was in the habit of calculating before she acted, and before she promised; and of looking to her own exertions and self-denial for the means of indulging the

benevolent propensities which were ardently felt, though very quietly manifested. Her children, like herself, were accustomed to habits of diligence and care; and were taught to be frugal, that they might be generous. Three of them readily proposed to give a penny a week each, for the purpose of putting the youngest two of widow Cox's children to the infant school. This left the poor woman at liberty to earn something for their support; and as she was expert both at ironing and shoebinding, through Mrs. Selby's kind interest, she got employment in several gentlemen's families in the former department, and work from the shoemakers to fill up her odd time. From her brother, a farmer, Mrs. Selby obtained the grant of a quart of skim-milk daily; which was of great assistance to the poor family, and led to a still more important advantage. The little lad who daily fetched the milk, was clean, active, and civil, and at Michaelmas the farmer took him into his employ, where he was entirely off his mother's hands, and in time became able to assist her. With a few old garments, tidily made up by Mrs. Selby and her daughters, widow Cox's eldest girl was fitted out and placed in the nursery of a lady whom Mrs. Selby had supplied with baby linen; and the second girl Mrs. Selby took herself, and instructed in the business. Thus the whole family were put in a way of helping themselves as far as they were capable. The little amount of subscriptions collected, paid the rent and funeral expenses of poor Cox, and left a trifle in hand, which just served to fit out the boy when he



entered the farmer's service. Every contributor on the list received a grateful courtesy whenever he met widow Cox ; but still Mrs. Selby, though her name was not found there, was ever regarded as the chief benefactor of the family. This was an instance among many ; and it was the astonishment of the town how the Selbys, who were so frugal and plain, could afford to be so charitable ; for few people are sufficiently aware that economy is the parent of generosity.

As to Mr. Jenkins, he got several times grossly imposed upon by fair-spoken strangers ; and, in consequence, he determined to have nothing more to do with cases ; and several worthy persons have been repulsed by him with a degree of unkindness contrary to his natural disposition. However, it is hoped that there will be a reaction, and that his habitual kindness of disposition will be exercised under the direction of sound wisdom and discretion.

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.

A LADY, in the neighbourhood of London, observed a poor woman, apparently weak with hunger, and clad in garments of the very meanest description, yet tolerably clean. She had a small bundle on her back, most probably containing her little all. She walked stooping, and placed her hands behind her, as if to relieve her back of the little load. The lady followed her some time, observing that she passed feebly on, evi-

dently in want, yet asked no relief, at houses, or from passengers. She slipped a trifle into her hand. The poor creature turned round with surprise; cast her eyes first on her benefactress, then on her gift; then raised them upwards, and, with tears in her eyes, merely said, "As if you had known my thoughts!" She said no more, but passed on, no doubt to procure, perhaps to share with a needy family, the food she much needed; perhaps to retain through life a grateful sense of the kindness she had received from a stranger; perhaps—it is a pleasing thought—perhaps to acknowledge the mercy with humble thankfulness to Him who did indeed know her thoughts and her necessities; who regards the prayer of the destitute; who directed the steps of the stranger, afforded her the means of imparting relief, and touched her heart with compassion. If the poor creature thus knew and acknowledged her heavenly Benefactor, it may be added, she supplicated that the kindness of her unknown friend might be rewarded sevenfold into her bosom, and be acknowledged in the last great day, when not a cup of cold water given to a disciple of Christ shall lose its reward.

BENEVOLENCE REWARDED.

A GENTLEMAN from the country, passing through the streets of the metropolis, saw a poor man who had formerly been employed by him as a labourer, and inquired into his circumstances, which were those of extreme poverty and distress.

He had come up to London to seek employ, but, failing to obtain it, was reduced to extreme destitution. The gentleman gave him a shilling, and passed on, perhaps scarcely recollecting the circumstance, till it was recalled to his mind by the man himself, whom, about twelve months afterwards, he met again, and whose decent clothing and cheerful looks indicated a favourable change in his circumstances. "Sir," said the poor fellow, "I am bound to bless you and pray for you as long as I live : that shilling you gave me has been the making of me ; bad enough I wanted it for food ; but I resolved, first, to turn it round : so I went up and down one of the principal streets, and collected as many hare-skins as it would purchase ; these I disposed of, and contented myself with such food as the profits would afford, still reserving the shilling as my stock in trade. By degrees I saved a little more, and then I could gain a little more ; and so I have ever since obtained a decent livelihood ; and to you, sir, I am indebted for the foundation of it all. But for your timely aid, I might have perished. May a blessing attend you as long as you live !"

Several years afterwards, the gentleman had the renewed satisfaction of ascertaining the continued welfare of the poor man and his family, and of being pleasingly reminded of his valuable shilling. Having some property, which was necessarily left during the night in a somewhat exposed situation, on a wharf, he spoke to a policeman, in whose district it lay, and requested his special vigilance. The young man respect-

fully bowed, and promised to do his best. Next day the following conversation took place on the wharf, while the goods were removing:—

Policeman. I hope, sir, you find every thing right.

Gentleman. Quite so; I am obliged by your attention, and beg you to accept this trifle.

Pol. I thank you all the same, sir, but I cannot accept of anything, my engagement forbids it; and if it were otherwise, I should be bound to defend your property by day or by night to the utmost of my power. You have been a great benefactor to our family; but for you I should not have been in my present situation.

Gent. You surprise me; I do not recollect ever seeing you until you came here as policeman.

Pol. I dare say not, sir; I am the eldest son of —, to whom you gave a shilling, in London, fourteen or fifteen years ago. That shilling, sir, was the turning point with our family; we were then on the point of starving; but we have ever since been more and more thriving. My father is now superintendent of a division of police in London, and my brother and myself have been some time in this line: when the police was established in this place, I was sent down to take a department, and my parents charged me to take an opportunity of offering you their humble respects and grateful thanks. They live in a very comfortable way at No. —, —, and would be very happy if you would please to take rest or refreshment with them, at any time that you may happen to be in London.

How cheap is the luxury of doing good! How rich is the reward of benevolence, when the "blessing of him that was ready to perish" comes upon the individual, whom, when the eye sees, it blesses, and when the ear hears, it gives thanks! Job xxix. 11—13. When did the votaries of dissipation and self-indulgence derive gratification from the expenditure of thousands, equal to that enjoyed by this benevolent individual at the trifling expense of one shilling?

The reader in humble life will do well to observe the advantages resulting from industry, frugality, and self-denial. Those who have but little, are often accustomed to think it not worth trying to save. This poor man thought differently. He had but *one shilling*. If he had spent the whole on supplies for the present moment, a few hours would have renewed his wants; but many days or weeks might have elapsed without renewing his means of supply. Had he suffered the opportunity to escape of making that one shilling the means of his future subsistence, another opportunity might not have presented itself; but he wisely preferred a little present self-denial, industry, and forethought, with the hope of bettering his future condition, to a little present gratification, with future wretchedness and poverty. There is always a positive pleasure, in a present voluntary sacrifice, for the hope of future advantage. The principle may be carried still higher. A preference of future substantial good, to present momentary gratification, is that which characterizes the Christian as different from the men of the world: they have their por-

tion on earth ; he chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He has respect unto the recompence of reward ; and reckons the sufferings and privations of this present life not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed ; while he looks not at the things that are seen and are temporal, but at the things that are not seen and are eternal.

EVENING XVI.



THE ONLY CHILD.

FREDERICK was the darling of an amiable, excellent, and pious pair. All their hopes and expectations were centred in this boy, and the utmost care and attention were bestowed on his health, comfort, and instruction. The best works on the management of infants, and on general education, were consulted; and the parents were continually resolving, in the management of their child, to adopt the most judicious rules. Accordingly, the child's food, and clothing, and bedding, and nursery, were exactly conformed to the directions of physicians and philosophers. It was expected that he would certainly prove a paragon. But his real interests were unconsciously sacrificed to extreme tenderness and false indulgence.

The nurse was directed daily to wash him with cold water; but if the child happened to cry, and the mother was within hearing, she flew to the spot, and ordered the nurse to desist, and pacify him, lest he should cry himself into fits. The nurse assured her there was no danger, and that a little perseverance would cure the young gentleman of his tantrums; but in

vain: the mother insisted that his life would be endangered by suffering him to cry; adding, "and he is our only child."

The acuteness of children, in detecting the weakness of those who manage them, is truly surprising. In a short time, it became a constant practice with master Frederick, to take his washing and dressing patiently when attended by his nurse alone; but to scream so as to compel her to desist, if his mother happened to be present.

Every instance of infantile violence was thus appeased by indulgence, under the impression of this ill-founded terror; and though even the partial parents could not help observing with pain, that the temper of their darling became more and more irritable and impetuous, they comforted themselves with the expectation that, as reason advanced, and the child became capable of instruction, the evil would be subdued by argument and example.

Meanwhile, the unwise indulgence was apologized for, with, "It is not quite right, to be sure; but what is to be done in the case of an only child? Most of the writers who so strongly enforce implicit obedience were not themselves parents: besides, the delicate health of our darling requires more indulgence than would be necessary in ordinary cases."

The health of Frederick was not naturally delicate, but it was injured by excessive indulgence, and the minds of the parents were tortured with needless apprehensions. In case of the slightest indisposition, real or imaginary, the whole house was thrown into confusion.

On one of these occasions, a shrewd old gentleman was visiting the family. On the usual apology being presented for the total interruption of domestic comfort, "You cannot wonder at our anxiety for our only child;" the visitor replied, "Take care that you do not verify the old adage, 'One child, and three fools.'"

This blunt saying was by no means relished; yet the footing on which the old gentleman stood in the family prevented direct offence being taken, and the conscience of the parents sometimes whispered an apprehension that there was too much truth in it. In conversation with each other, they frequently lamented the difference between their professed rules and actual practice, in the management of their child; but they quieted themselves with the conclusion, that either the rules proposed were in themselves impracticable, or that some peculiarity in the constitution of their child rendered them in this case inexpedient.

In a case of real illness, the physician was entreated to try every thing, under the consideration that his little patient was "an only child;" but what he proposed was objected to by the tender mother, as too harsh a remedy to be ventured upon.

"My dear lady," said the honest physician, "be assured that I will pay exactly the same attention to your child, as I do to one of the numerous family of a poor neighbour, suffering under the same complaint; and if, in any respect, you insist on my adopting a different mode of treatment, I can only say you do not allow me to do my utmost for your child's re-

covery, and you alone must be responsible for a failure."

The perils of infancy passed, it was considered high time to commence the young gentleman's education. The mother was his first preceptress; and, as he was a child of quick abilities and inquiring mind, it was no very difficult task to instil ideas into his mind, and to store his memory. His progress was fully satisfactory to his parents, and they not unfrequently had the pleasure of hearing their son extolled as a prodigy.

It has been stated, that the parents were pious; and it will be concluded that the early instructions of their child were of a religious character. With fondest delight they heard him lisp the Saviour's name in the words of prayer and praise, and with diligent care they taught him the precepts of the gospel. Nor were they deficient in setting him a correspondent example. But what availed it that the child could, if he chose to do it, repeat hymns, catechisms, and passages of Scripture: that he could readily say, "I must not do this or that;" or, "I must do the other;" while practical obedience was never enforced?

The old gentleman, whose dry adage reproved the ill-judged indulgence of infancy, often urged upon the doating parents the necessity of discipline as well as instruction. "Remember," said he, "the injunctions, 'Train up a child in the way he should go;' 'Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;'" and do not let your diligent performance of one part of

your duty, satisfy you in neglecting the other. Come with me to my garden, and I will show you a practical illustration of what I consider your error in the education of your child."

Side by side, in the old gentleman's garden, grew two peach trees, of equal age, and enjoying equal advantages of aspect and soil, but as different as possible in appearance. The one was carefully trained to the wall, its superfluous shoots had been pruned away; and its branches, properly thinned and neatly trained, were loaded with fine ripe fruit. The other was thick, wild, and bushy. Here and there an awkward attempt was made to confine an ill-shaped branch to the wall by means of a long piece of list, which, however, it had burst through; the stem was cankered, and not a mark of fruitfulness appeared on the boughs.

"There," said the old gentleman, "look at the picture of your parental mismanagement. Both of these trees are provided with nurture; so is your child: no one will accuse you of withholding instruction from him; but one of these trees has had the additional advantage of training and admonition, if I may so express myself. It has been thinned, and pruned, and early accustomed to subjection and discipline, and now the salutary restraint of the wall seems perfectly natural to it. You admire the order and regularity of its growth, as well as its fruitfulness and vigour. These are the result of discipline, to which your child is a stranger. The other tree I have suffered to run wild for your conviction. I have imagined myself as fond a

gardener as you are parents; and I have said, 'That irregular shoot ought to come off, but I will suffer it to remain; it is green and luxuriant, it is an indication of boldness, spirit, and vigour in the root: that canker ought to be removed, but I will suffer it to remain lest the skin should be irritated: there the pruning knife is required, but I will not venture to use it, lest the tree should bleed to death.' In short, whatever discipline has been necessary to the welfare of my tree, I have found some excuse for withholding it; and you see the result."

The admonition was not entirely lost; the parents resolved to exert greater firmness in the management of their boy. But the earliest, best time was gone by. His spirit was found stubborn and unyielding, as the thick and crooked branches of the peach tree. After a few faint, feeble efforts, from time to time, the parents satisfied themselves in leaving him to take his own way. Entreaties, indeed, were often employed, but authority was not exerted; and as the youth grew in stature and in strength, he utterly set at defiance every attempt at authority. The fondness and tenderness of parents awakened no kindred returns: for, in general, it will be found, that children do not even love a parent whom they have never been accustomed to obey.

When placed under a tutor, he learned; for learning was neither difficult nor unpleasant to him; but he spurned control: and he dared to do it under the persuasion, that an appeal to his parents could not be resisted.

Frederick courted the society of companions whom his parents could not approve. They entreated him to "forsake the foolish and live," and to "go in the way of understanding;" but remonstrance had little effect.

At length Frederick discovered, that the religion of his parents was unfashionable, and determined no longer to attend Divine service with them. He would go to some fashionable resort, where music and company, rather than devotion, formed the attraction. The transition was easy to throwing off the very appearance of religion altogether.

This was a blow that his tender parents could ill sustain. Their fondest hope had been, that this child should rise up to sustain the interests of religion, when they should sink in the vale of years; but to see their darling sitting in the seat of scorners, and treading in the steps of the ungodly and vicious, rejecting instruction, and despising reproof—this embittered every earthly possession, cast a gloom over every prospect; and their "only child," instead of being the same that should comfort them in the work of their hands, was the same that brought down their early grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Let parents remember, that they are required by God, not only to teach, but to rebuke and correct their children with all authority.

THOUGHTS ON DISCRETION.

PRUDENCE, or discretion, is a quality of in-

estimable worth, and constant practical utility. It is absolutely essential to success in life; and we do not pass a day, or scarcely an hour, in which it is not called into requisition, or in which some practical inconvenience does not result from its absence.

Illustrations of this sentiment abound in common life. It may be interesting to collect a few examples under the several particulars in which discretion or practical wisdom is expected to exert its influence.

1. *In regard to health.*—Discretion should regulate our practice as to diet, clothing, exercise, repose; each of which must be materially conducive to, or destructive of our health. It is by no means necessary that we should be continually studying the wholesomes and unwholesomes, or consulting the barometer every time we wish to take a breath of air; but common sense will dictate that every one who wishes to preserve his health, must adhere to the simplicity of nature. It may be set down as a rule, that whatever on the first trial would seem monstrous or disgusting to a person in health, is unnatural; and though habit may reconcile to its use, it is, in some way or other, injurious. Even depraved man is not deprived of natural instinct: that instinct never fails to excite repugnance against strong liquors or incongruous mixtures, the first time of tasting them; and no subsequent habit can render them harmless. Discretion would restrain a man from venturing on such dangerous ground. But many a man has suffered himself to be

drawn away in this snare, until (to say nothing of the moral tendency of the habit) he has become a martyr to disease.

The health of thousands is sacrificed to the indulgence of the appetite. Every public dinner, and too many private dinners, where not a thought of excess or intemperance is admitted, afford illustrations of this remark. If two things were taken into consideration, a very moderate degree of discretion would work an entire change in the table habits of many, who do not set themselves down for fools. These two considerations are, the size of the human stomach, and the chemical actions of different substances upon each other. A gentleman, who had greatly injured his health by the indulgence of his palate, and yet would not admit that he had ever exceeded the bounds of moderation, was at length convinced and cured by the following expedient of his physician. He directed the attendants of the gentleman to provide a vessel that would contain several gallons, and for one day, whenever their master ate or drank, to put into this vessel the same quantity of every article. He then called on the gentleman, showed him an exact model of the human stomach, explained to him its texture, and liability to injury by distension or oppression, by the application of hot spices or liquors; interested him in several chemical experiments, by bringing together incongruous mixtures of acid and alkali, grease and liquid, solid flesh and ardent spirit, and explaining their operation on each other. He then showed him the vessel and its mass of heterogeneous contents, the counterpart of which

had been thrust into his own digestive apparatus. The gentleman was appalled, and convinced. He commenced and persevered in a course of temperance bordering upon abstinence; and he enjoyed, in consequence, a long continuance of health and activity.

But there are other ways in which health is sacrificed to want of discretion. The heir to an extensive estate, (Sir C. Willoughby, of Baldon, Oxon,) a fine vigorous young man, within a few days of coming of age, and entering on the possession of his property, having overheated and fatigued himself at cricket, laid down on the grass, intending only to repose himself a few minutes; but he fell asleep, and remained so an hour or two. His life was the price of this act of indiscretion; and the bells that were to have proclaimed and congratulated him on his entrance into the possession of his spacious domains, sounded his summons to the tomb of his ancestors.

The greatest indiscretion is often practised in respect of damp beds, or clothing. It is especially to be deplored, that this is often chargeable upon the heads of families, who ought to be peculiarly characterized by the opposite quality. No mistress of a family ought to rest satisfied, when a visitor is expected, or has arrived unexpectedly, with charging the servants to be sure that the bed is well-aired, but should make it a matter of personal investigation. Indeed, even this is far from being so safe and satisfactory as the simple rule of never suffering a bed to become damp. It may be easily prevented, by causing each spare bed to be slept in

two or three nights in every week. This should be done on regular days, otherwise there will be a danger of its being forgotten or deferred; and there is no security through a longer interval. The number of valuable lives sacrificed to this species of indiscretion would almost exceed belief. As one instance out of many, it was not long since announced, in a religious periodical, that an amiable and excellent young minister, who had consecrated himself to the missionary work, and was about to embark for the appointed field of labour, had fallen a victim to the carelessness of some family manager, who had permitted him to sleep in a damp bed; and that two other missionaries, visiting England, had sustained serious illness from the same cause. A somewhat similar instance occurred a few years since. A young minister, having taken a severe cold, was advised to take a dose of James's powders. He did so. The medicine produced powerful perspiration, and gave complete relief. He rose in the morning comparatively well. The linen in which he had slept was literally wet with the perspiration, and ought to have been changed or thoroughly dried; but this needful precaution was disregarded, and the young man got into a damp bed, which struck a sudden chill to him, and brought on a rapid consumption, that soon terminated his mortal career.

Some invalids, or persons of delicate health, and some mothers in respect to their children, are sadly indiscreet in encountering bleak, damp, or evening air, or venturing abroad in the first

deceitful sunshine of spring. This is done sometimes through mere heedlessness; sometimes from determined hardihood. In either case, the mistake has often been attended with fatal results. It was once said, by an aged and eminent physician, to a very young mother, and deeply impressed upon her mind, "Go home, go home directly! Never bring an infant out in an easterly wind." It was a cheerful, sunshiny day, the infant was well wrapped up, and the mother had no idea but that the air would be beneficial to it: but long experience and observation convinced her of the propriety of the old doctor's caution, and led her to believe, that in nine cases out of ten, the distressing alarms of croup, bowel complaints, or inflammation, which so often prove fatal to infants, have been preceded by improper exposure to cold or damp. Several instances press upon her recollection. Early in the spring, when the air was mild, and the aspect of nature inviting, but before the sun had gained sufficient ascendancy to dry the ground, a child of two years old was permitted to run on the grass, and perhaps to sit down or stoop to gather daisies. It was, in consequence, seized with rheumatic fever. After suffering excruciating pain for many weeks, if not months, it in some degree recovered, but the limbs were enfeebled and distorted, and to the present day it is but a helpless cripple.

A mother, being invited to a party of pleasure, and unwilling to forego the gratification, took her infant with her. It was a clear moonlight evening when she carried home the sleeping

babe, wrapped up in her cloak, but not so effectually as to exclude the keen air from its tender bowels and chest. In a few days it fell a victim to inflammation and convulsions.

It was at that doubtful season, when there seems to be a contention between the bleak winds of March, the showers and sunshine of April, and the blighting mildew of May, that the sound of drums and trumpets was heard. Instantly, many a window was thrown up, and many a head thrust out with eager gaze. Among the rest, at the three open sashes of a bow window, appeared Mrs. L., with three children, just recovering from the whooping cough, and her servant with a beautiful babe of six months old, which had escaped the infection. The object of attraction was a regiment of soldiers, passing with a fine band of music. The music was heard, perhaps, the distance of a mile from the town, its approach along a straight road eagerly watched, and its passage traced till fairly out of sight. This must have occupied twenty minutes, or more, during which time the indiscreet mother exposed herself and family to the gusts of air coming in every direction. The very next morning, the curtains of the bow window were drawn, and the shutters below were closed, for in the night the babe had been carried off by the croup. The other three children had a severe return of the whooping cough, of which one of them died about a fortnight after.

2. *Discretion is especially needed in the government of the tongue.*—The tongue is a very useful, but by nature a very unruly member.

It requires the restraint both of common prudence and of Divine grace.

There is a danger of speaking foolishly and frivolously. "Vain thoughts lodge within us," and it is but to open the door of the lips and give them utterance, and they become disgraceful to ourselves, and injurious to others. A wise man knows how to pick and cull his thoughts for conversation, by suppressing some, and communicating others; whereas, the indiscreet man lets them all indifferently fly out in words. Oh, the number of silly, unmeaning things that some people say! the empty flatteries, the silly jests, the mere idle talking for talking sake! How truly did the apostle call it "foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient!" How weighty are the observations of the wise man; "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin!" "A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards;" till he has had time, according to the good maxim, to "think twice before he speaks once," and to satisfy himself that it is worth saying. A young lady with a very pretty face, but a head full of emptiness and vanity, was continually letting out her vagaries, to the disgust of her sober friends; the general topic of her conversation was the young men she had met in different parties, or to whom she expected to be introduced in parties to which she was invited. She affected to speak of them all with great contempt; one she called a stupid brute, another an awkward clown, a third a conceited dandy, a fourth a methodical old book-worm; but it was very evident that

not one would have met a refusal, had he offered her his services as a partner for life. It happened that the latter of these gentlemen had actually been taken with her pretty face, and sought opportunities of increasing his acquaintance with her. He met her several times; but it happened to be in the society only of persons so very far her superiors both in rank and age, as completely overawed her; and as no young companion was present, who might have set free the inexhaustible stores of her tongue, on this occasion she had the advantage which circumstances sometimes thrust upon a fool, the reputation of being accounted wise, because he holds his peace. The gentleman thought highly of her, and concluded that she was treasuring up for her own improvement, all the sensible conversation of others. At length, he had made up his mind to commit himself to a direct offer, and called at the house where she was visiting, with that intention. Most fortunately for him, he found the young lady alone, had the full satisfaction of hearing her talk nonsense for an hour or two, when he took his leave, and soberly resolved to remain in single blessedness, until he should meet with as pretty a face, connected with a larger portion of mind, and free from so fearful a redundancy of tongue. Poor girl! by her want of discretion she has defeated herself in the grand object on which her heart is supremely set, and which would form, above all others, the most delightful theme for her busy tongue—the prospect of being married. “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman without discretion.”

Discretion should restrain persons from improperly communicating affairs, whether their own or those of other people. There are many affairs which belong only to the parties concerned, and ought to be confined to them. But some persons are very fond of talking of affairs to those who are no way interested in them ; not with a view of seeking counsel, or in any way doing good to themselves or others, but generally for the sake of displaying themselves, their own, or their family's greatness or cleverness ; or their discernment in finding out, or being in some way possessed of a secret. By such indiscretion the best laid projects have been defeated, without any malicious intention. The friend of a worthy young tradesman, having just heard that one in the same line of business was about to leave, called on him to apprise him of the circumstance, and to offer his assistance in enabling him to take the premises. The matter required a little deliberation ; and the young man requested his friend to examine the present state of his affairs, to ascertain whether they would justify his entering on an enlarged sphere. This occupied an hour or more. Then the wife of the young tradesman was called in to join the consultation. The transaction excited the curiosity of a young relative, who happened to be in the house. She meanly listened at the door, and caught a confused idea of what was going on ; just enough to enable her to inform her confidential friend that Mr. — was leaving the place, she believed he was likely to fail, but that she was not quite sure ; however, she could say

for certain, that Mr. — was going to take to his business. The confidant had another confidant, to whom it was quickly communicated, so effectually, that before the young man and his friend could arrange and present their honourable proposals, the distorted report had reached the retiring tradesman, who indignantly rejected all treaty, and charged the applicant with having basely originated a report to his disadvantage. Being a man of hasty and implacable temper, he could not be induced to listen to any assurance or explanations, but resolved to bring in another person, and that in a way the most injurious to one whom he conceived to have injured him. He was a rich man, and he spared no expence to gratify a vindictive spirit. This trifling affair issued in the ruin of a deserving young man, to whom it was intended to prove, and might have proved, most advantageous, but for the indiscreet babbling of a silly girl.

A somewhat similar case occurred some years since. Among the passengers in a stage coach was a very loquacious lady, who gratuitously informed her fellow passengers, that she was subpoenaed to give evidence on a trial, at the — assizes. A gentleman and lady in the coach seemed determined, if possible, to convey a tacit reproof, by turning away from a conversation in which they had no concern, and making their remarks to each other on some other subject; but another gentleman encouraged the lady to proceed, and, affecting total ignorance of the parties and the affairs in dispute, led her on to inform him the nature and extent of her own

evidence, and all she knew of other witnesses. What was her surprise and consternation on entering the court, to find that her fellow traveller was the lawyer employed on the other side, and that he had made such good use of her indiscreet communications, as to have procured counter evidence to almost every particular! She had the mortification of being held up to public ridicule in court, and of knowing that her friend lost his cause through her folly.

Discretion in the government of the tongue is necessary to restrain the utterance of hasty, petulant expressions, in a moment of irritation. For want of this, a slight disagreement, even between near friends, has sometimes been magnified and perpetuated into real enmity. It is a maxim of the ancients, that "a man should live with his enemy in such a manner as might teach him soon to become his friend; and with his friend in such a manner, that if he became his enemy, it should not be in his power to hurt him;" a maxim well worth the attention of those who are apt to give way to extravagant expressions of either fondness or resentment. "A fool's wrath is presently known;" but a man of understanding knows how to restrain those bitter expressions, which do but irritate at the time, and which often leave a soreness behind them that frequently precludes a cordial reconciliation, even though both parties are convinced of the foolishness of the quarrel—but here has been the bar, "He said so and so of me, which I can never forget"—"I am sorry I said it, but I cannot eat my own words. Having said it, I must

abide by the consequences." The more intimate knowledge the parties have previously had of each other, the more bitter, probably, will be their reproaches and sarcasms, and the more difficult to gainsay them; and thus, as the wise man observed, "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city; and their contentions are as the bars of a castle." "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger;" and the holy influence of the principles of the gospel is as strikingly seen in this as in any particular. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, must be no brawler, must speak evil of no man; must not suffer the sun to go down upon his wrath; must put away from him all bitterness and wrath, and clamour and evil-speaking." But "if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain."

3. *Discretion, or the wisdom of the prudent, is profitable to direct in those things that concern our worldly interests.*—There is a folly stamped on all the projects and pursuits of some people, that must infallibly bring them to ruin, in spite of all the advantages which Providence puts into their hands. Even in respect to common things it may be said, "Wherefore is there a price put into the hands of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" Perhaps there is no mark of indiscretion more evident than that of acting by impulse, and without any settled plan. Common sense suggests the propriety of forming a plan by which to guide our movements; forming it, however, with such a con-

viction of our liability to err, as will guard us against rejecting prudent counsel, or resisting conviction of any practicable improvement. Indiscretion will almost always be forward either to act on the impulse of the moment, regardless of consequences, or else, hastily to adopt a plan of its own, and stubbornly to adhere to it, in spite of all the remonstrances of judicious friends. Every day exemplifies the evils of such indiscretion, and illustrates and enforces the remarks and cautions of the wise man, "Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war," or engage in any important enterprise. "Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thy house;" a sentiment which has been thus happily expounded, and which conveys a striking lesson to young beginners at the present day, who are too apt first to make a showy appearance, and then to look after the means of supporting it. "The most needful and profitable work should be first attended to. Men ought to employ their labour and expense in cultivating the land, before they proceed to build and beautify their houses, and furnish them in an elegant style, or even in a commodious manner. For if the house be built, and the land neglected, another man will be likely to possess both of them." Or the proverb may mean, that every thing should be done with deliberation, foresight, and contrivance: "Get all ready, as well as count the cost, before you begin to build."

Discretion is especially needful as a female virtue; hence it is said, "Every wise woman

buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." The virtuous woman is characterized as "considering a field, and purchasing it; as planting a vineyard with the fruit of her hands," and by her industry, discretion, and good management, in every way promoting the honour and comfort of her own family, and obtaining the means of relieving the distresses of others. But an indiscreet woman, who wastes time, and squanders away money on trifling visits and expensive pleasures, often proves the ruin of her family, even though it had been in a thriving condition, and though her husband be frugal and industrious: she acts as if she would pull down her house with her own hands.

4. *Discretion should be exercised in the care of character and reputation.*—Of all species of fool-hardiness, that is perhaps one of the most foolish that says, "I do not care what people think of me." We ought not to be indifferent to the opinion that others form of us. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." It is our duty to seek to be respected; and if we act as we ought to do, we may constrain even our very enemies, if we have any, to respect us. Daniel thus constrained the respect of those who were plotting his ruin, and in so doing he brought honour not only to his own character, but to the religion he professed. "The presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault

found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." If we desire a like honourable distinction, we must avoid not only evil, but the very appearance of evil, and cultivate not only such things as are good and lawful, but such as are lovely and of good report. It is very possible to live far above the opinion of men as to our principles, motives, aims, and, at the same time, so to act as to secure their good opinions, to constrain them to "take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus." By this species of holy discretion many opposers have been silenced, and brought to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

A very wicked man, who had continually reviled his godly neighbour, when seized with an alarming illness, sent to request his instant attendance. The pious man came, not a little surprised at the application. "I sent for you," said the sick man, "to make my will, and pray for me; my head is distracted, but make haste and write my will, while I have ability to sign it. I cannot tell you what to say, only that you are to be the executor, and then I know it will be managed faithfully and discreetly for my widow and child. And then pray for me; for if God will hear any one's prayers for a dying sinner, I am sure He will hear yours." Thus did the reviler of godliness bear his testimony to the excellence of a consistent man's character. Surely it is the Christian's duty to maintain, not only a conscience void of offence both towards

God and man, but also to maintain a character above suspicion, and that can command an honourable testimony even from the enemies of the truth.

5. *Discretion should be exercised in the formation of habits.*—We are all, in a great measure, the creatures of habit. That which at first was a matter of indifference, by long use becomes absolutely essential to our comfort. How important, then, that we should guard against such habits as may in any degree be evil, or lead to evil; or which cannot be practised without inconvenience to ourselves or others! Some habits are needlessly expensive; others are injurious in their physical or their moral tendency. Perhaps, at first, they were thoughtlessly indulged, in a mere frolic, or bravado; but, by degrees, they become interwoven with the very constitution, and hold it with the force of an irresistible chain, and with the corrosiveness of deadly poison. Sound discretion will guard against the first experiment. To a failure in discretion and resolution in this respect, may be traced the ruin of ten thousand inveterate drunkards, to say nothing of the influence of other habits equally pernicious.

6. *Discretion should influence the choice of our society.*—It is not uncommonly pleaded by young persons, when warned or remonstrated with on this subject, “He is not exactly a friend; only an acquaintance. I may indulge a little general acquaintance, without suffering it to grow to an intimacy. Besides, I am not obliged to imitate what I see amiss.” No; sound dis-

cretion would remind us of the sacred proverb, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." The moth may flutter round the candle, and it is not necessarily obliged to fly into the flame; but common observation teaches us that it always does so; and discretion, if we could but impart it to the silly flutterer, would instantly direct its flight far from the centre of dangerous attraction. So would it warn young men, and young women, to keep far from the society of the gay, the vain, the irreligious, the indiscreet.

7. *Discretion has much to do in directing our religious course.*—It is not the part of discretion to go wandering from place to place, to indulge the propensity of itching ears; to venture within the precincts of error, in confidence that we shall escape unhurt; to spend time on nice speculations and unprofitable disputations, which ought to be employed in humble devotion and practical improvement. Too many indiscreet professors of religion have entered on these by-paths, and have made shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience; while the truly stedfast, consistent, and honourable Christian will generally be found to have practised those maxims of sound discretion, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee; ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established; turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil."

THE ANNIVERSARY.



MANY weeks had elapsed since the last evening, recorded in these pages. The domestic tea party was about to hold its meeting, and Mrs. Elliott, Junior, was again bestowing the mistress's scrutinizing glance on the arrangements of her best parlour. The furniture of the apartment had been preserved with neatness and care, and had scarcely lost any of its first freshness of appearance. All looked much as it did that day twelvemonth, except that the piano-forte had been displaced a foot or two, to make room for a cot, which now occupied the corner of the room. Having satisfied herself that all was right, Mrs. Elliott seated herself to needlework; her husband, at the same time, was employed in placing ready his books and papers for the engagement of the evening. "How these papers accumulate!" observed Mr. Elliott; "and how time passes away! Are you aware that a year has elapsed since the formation of our little society?"

"Yes; it is just a year since our first tea

party. I was thinking of it as I dusted the best tea-things ; and what changes have taken place during that time in our own little circle ! Let me see, among those who formed our first tea party, there were our three dear parents ; they, through mercy, are all spared to us, and are able still to enrich and adorn our social circle : but the infirmities of age are evidently creeping on them. My mother's cough was worse last winter, and left her more weakened by it, than on any previous year ; and your mother, with all her activity, manifests fatigue sooner than she used to do."

" Yes ; and my father has more than once been seized with giddiness and faintness, which I thought rather alarming. I cannot help looking upon his life as peculiarly precarious."

" O William, what a loss we shall sustain if either of them should be taken from us ! and yet it is what in the course of things we must expect. When my own dear father died, I was too young to entertain any just sense of the loss. Perhaps I have entered more fully into my own privation in that respect, since I have witnessed and shared the privilege you enjoy in the society of *both* your dear parents : and my own precious mother seems even more to me than when I was constantly with her."

" Yes, my dear ; and how interesting and valuable we now find many of their remarks and sentiments, especially those concerning the duties and relations we at present sustain, which a few years ago we heard with comparative indifference !"

"Yes, I do call to mind many things which I have heard mother say years ago, and which I thought little of at the time, but now they come to me quite fresh and available for practical purposes; and I can assure you, there is not a word which either of our dear parents drop now, but I treasure it up as old gold. Their remarks seem to me, every time I am in their company, to be more and more judicious and instructive, fitted alike to assist us in discharging well the duties of life, and to elevate our views to heaven. I remember our good old minister, when pressing on my dear sisters and myself the duty of filial reverence and obedience, said to us, that we should never know the value of a pious parent, and of parental instructions, until we became parents ourselves; and I am every day more and more convinced of the truth of his observation."

"Well, we must cherish and improve the privilege while it is continued to us, and endeavour to soothe the minds of our beloved parents in their declining days, not only by every tender and delicate attention to their wishes and comforts, but by manifesting to them that their instructions and example have not been in vain."

"I trust it will be so. Well, then, among the changes of the year, you and I, my William, are sobered down from the gay bridal pair—not very gay—into steady old housekeepers and careful parents. How this precious charge, with which we are entrusted, comes into consideration in all our plans and arrangements! We never were much inclined to gad about; but how this

endears home to us ! and how often does it give us a special errand to the throne of grace, for wisdom and grace to enable us to discharge well the duties of the parental relation, and for a blessing to rest on this young immortal ! We have experienced signal mercies during the past year. It has, indeed, been one continued series of mercies ; but what important obligations and responsibilities are laid upon us ! Oh, how can people trifle about being married ! it is really one of the most serious things in the world ! ”

“ Certainly, one of the most important ; but, with all your grave reflections, in which I fully coincide, I do not think as yet that matrimony has drawn the lines of care and sorrow on either of our countenances. I never saw yours look more healthy and placid than at the present moment ; and I am sure I can say for myself, that each new relationship into which I have been permitted to enter, while it makes me more than ever deeply conscious of my growing need of Divine direction, assistance, and support, has brought with it an unspeakable accession of happiness.”

The tears of affection, gratitude, and gladness, glistened on the eyes that met in tender expression ; and a prayer was breathed that such mutual felicity might be perpetuated, and sanctified, and subordinated to that great end of man, which to the Christian ought to be dearer than any earthly delights, dearer than life itself—conformity to the will, and subserviency to the glory of God.

The happy pair proceeded to speak of the

changes in their little circle, in some of which Christian sympathy was called to "weep with those that wept;" in other cases, to "rejoice with those that rejoiced:" for, in one instance, parents had been called to mourn over the loss of their firstborn; and another family was struggling hard with the vicissitudes and uncertainties of trade. On the other hand, a considerable accession of property had placed one family in circumstances of ease and comfort; and the two young ladies who were among the first tea party, had recently entered into agreeable matrimonial connexions, and were settled in other neighbourhoods. One or two new comers were expected that evening to fill their places.

"It is a great pleasure," observed Mr. Elliott, "to believe that all these various changes have been met by our beloved friends with the temper and disposition of Christians. The prosperous seem to enjoy God in all; the afflicted and bereaved to find all in God. Each seems desirous of understanding and fulfilling the design of God in the dispensations of his providence. We see in each an interesting and instructive illustration of the power of true religion; its tendency to ennoble, and dignify, and regulate the Christian amid all the changing circumstances of earth and time; its adaptation to the most minute and ordinary duties of domestic life, as well as the sublime and all-supporting consolations and elevating principles which connect with immortality. I cannot help hoping, Mary, that even our little friendly meetings have been useful in cultivating a habit of bring-

ing Christianity into the affairs of every-day life. Do you not think we have, in some degree, experienced this ourselves?"

"Yes, I hope we have; and, among all the changes, I must confess one that has taken place in myself. This day twelvemonth I felt and expressed my abhorrence of tea parties, which I seemed to fancy were almost invariably given up to frivolity and scandal. I am now convinced that it is possible for them to be so regulated, as to be not merely harmless, but conducive to real Christian friendship and practical good. There has not been one of our meetings in which there was not an opportunity afforded of gleaning something good; some instruction, some assistance in the discharge of our daily duties, and in sustaining well the character of heads or members of Christian households; something to awaken or keep alive serious personal inquiry, whether we are made partakers of genuine repentance and saving faith; whether in doing right things we are actuated by a right motive of obedience to the will of God; whether we endeavour not only to promote each others domestic comfort and enjoyment, but also to be fellow-helpers of each other in the ways of God; whether, as parents, we are as much alive to the immortal interests of our precious charge as to his present comfort; and whether, amidst all our enjoyments and all our anxieties, our hearts are supremely set on a treasure in heaven, and we possess a good hope, through grace, which enters into that within the veil. O, my dear William, I am sure we need something to keep us

constantly in mind of these things. I should dread to enter into any society that would have a tendency to divert us from them; and should our lives be spared to carry on these meetings through another year, I trust they will continue to be sacredly and profitably carried on, so as to promote the well-being of Christian families, and subserve, in some humble degree, to the glory of God, which He has condescended to connect with the consistent and exemplary deportment of his people in the commonest transactions of life. May it be our unceasing desire and attainment, to 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;' and 'whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God.' "

THE END.



